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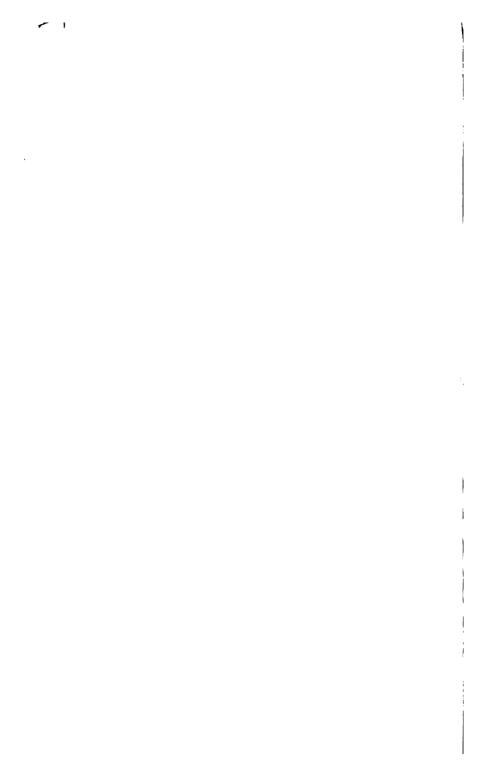
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GOMEZ ARIAS.

PRINTED BY GUNNELL AND SHEARMAN, 18, SALISBURY-SQUARE.

GOMEZ ARIAS;

OR,

THE MOORS OF THE ALPUJARRAS.

A SPANISH HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

DON TELESFORO DE TRUEBA Y COSÍO.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

LONDON:
HURST, CHANCE, AND CO.
65, 8T. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.

1828.

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TO THE

RIGHT HONORABLE LORD HOLLAND.

My Lord,

It is with pleasure I avail myself of your permission to dedicate the following Work to your name, as a small mark of my respect for your Lordship's character.

As a Spaniard, I find an additional motive for addressing it to one who has uniformly shewn the interest he feels in the prosperity and literature of my country.

I have the honor to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most obedient and obliged Servant,

TELESFORO DE TRUEBA Y COSIO.

London, March 1, 1828.

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PREFACE.

LET me intreat the reader not to be alarmed at this hacknied word, which generally augurs that a person is going to be very egotistical and prosy. This, at least, it will be my ambition to avoid. Nor is it my intention to assume its literary prerogatives in any way as a mask for a sort of mock humility, endeavouring to impose upon goodnatured persons by protestations of demerits, want of experience and talent, with that long series of et ceteras with which a writer generally opens his first campaign.

The public has nothing to do with an exculpatory doctrine, which carries with it the aggravating circumstance of not being sincere; for I am sure that no man, with a moderate share of common sense, will suppose that an author really believes

the accusation he so humbly utters against himself. Could he indeed persuade himself that his book was so very indifferent a performance, he might assuredly more justly accuse himself of acting the part of an unnatural parent in thus gratuitously exposing his intellectual offspring to the neglect and compassion of the world.

Besides, when an author presents his readers with this stultifying catalogue of demerits, he supplies them with the very best reasons to retort upon him:—"Good heavens; if the man has neither talents nor information, why does he write at all?" Having thus waved my claims to any similar indulgence, it only remains for me to say a few words respecting the origin and the object of the following Romance.

As an enthusiastic admirer of the lofty genius, the delightful and vivid creations of that great founder of English historical fiction, Sir Walter Scott, it often struck me, while reading his enchanting novels, as rather singular that he had never availed himself of the beautiful and inexhaustible materials

for works upon a similar plan to be met with in Spain. It has, indeed, been generally admitted that Spain was the classic ground of chivalry and romance. The long dominion of the Moors-the striking contrast between their religion, their customs and manners, and those of their Christian enemy—the different petty kingdoms into which Spain was divided, with the consequent feuds, intrigues and battles,—all concurred to produce a succession of extraordinary incidents and character, highly adapted for romantic and dramatic illustration. Yet, while the less abundant chronicles and traditions of England, Scotland, Ireland and France, were successively ransacked by the great magician and his most successful imitators, they seem almost studiously to have avoided dwelling upon those glowing, luxuriant productions, replete with such variety of incident and character, which form the national treasures of Spain.

Conceiving, then, that I had the same right as any one else to spoil, if I failed to give attraction to a fine subject. I found that my ideas were further confirmed by the encouragement of some of the most eminent amongst my fellow-countrymen. I accordingly engaged in the undertaking, the result of which is the following Romance.

With regard to the hero, I cannot well determine whether he ever existed or not. In spite of my researches. I have no other authority for his reality than the well known comedy of the celebrated Calderon de la Barca, entitled "La niña de Gomez Arias." The probability is, that Calderon took the hint of this comedy, according to a generally prevailing custom in his time, from some legend or tradition now lost. Be this as it may, it is enough that such characters as Gomez Arias are unfortunately within the pale of human nature. I have endeavoured, however, to soften the character, as it is depicted, from that of an utterly abandoned libertine into a man of extraordinary ambition; for great passions, though they cannot palliate crime, are nevertheless not inconsistent with a dereliction of moral and legal ties.

To conclude my prefatory reasons for not writing

a long preface, there is one point on which I am anxious to appeal to the indulgence of my readers. It is obvious that the work being written in English by a Spaniard, must bear some traces of its foreign descent. In extenuation of these unavoidable faults of style and language, I can only entreat that the English public will extend the same generous sympathy and benevolence to the errors of the author, which it has already evinced, in far more important matters, on behalf of his unfortunate fellow-countrymen.

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NOTES to Vol. I.

Note 1-page 5.

THE unfortunate passion of Don Rodrigo, the last of the Goths, for Florinda, surnamed La Cava, was the primary cause of the Moorish invasion, and the disastrous wars which followed. Count Julian, father of the frail fair one, highly indignant at the affront he had received, resolved to take the most signal vengeance. His views were warmly espoused by Don Oppas, Archbishop of Toledo, who was the most influential man in the kingdom. These two noblemen betrayed their country to the Moors, who, invited by them, landed in Spain, under the command of Tarik and Muza.

Note 2-pege 52.

The Chirimia was a musical instrument made of wood, resembling somewhat a wooden flageolet, though much longer: it contained ten holes; the wind pipe was thin, and made of reed. Pracentoria tuba, fistula musica. The Dulzaina was an instrument like the Chirimia, only upon a smaller scale, and capable of producing sounds more acute and sharp.—Tibia.

Note 3-page 204.

The Adarga was a peculiar sort of shield or short buckler used by the Spaniards in those times. The presentation of the adarga was equivalent to an offer of peace. It was a practice often resorted to by the persons entrusted with a mission to the enemy.

Note 4-page 216.

A Maravedi was a coin of such diminutive value as to an swer to the one-third of an English farthing.

*** The references to the two last notes were inadvertently left out in the text.

GUNNELL AND SHEARMAN, PRINTERS, SALISBURY SQUARE.

GOMEZ ARIAS:

OR,

THE MOORS OF THE ALPUJARRAS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

The ancient city of Granada has ever proved a source of gratification to those who have occupied themselves with the investigation of its earlier history. It abounds with objects curious and interesting; and is no less celebrated for the conspicuous place which it holds in the page of Spanish history,

than for the more pleasing associations of chivalry and romance. Situated at the base of the snow-capt mountains of the Sierra Nevada, and extending into the luxuriant plain of the Vega, it seems placed by nature as a barrier between an eternal winter and a constant spring—

"Not as elsewhere with fervours frosts severe,
Or clouds with calms divide the happy hours,
But heaven than whitest crystal e'en more clear,
A flood of sunshine in all seasons showers;
Nursing to fields their herbs, to herbs their flowers,
To flowers their smell, leaves to th' immortal trees:
Here by its lake the splendid palace towers,
On marble columns rich with golden frieze,
For leagues and leagues around, o'erhanging hills and
seas."

Wiffen's Tasso.

Amongst the many architectural remains which adorn the city, the palace of the Alhambra is perhaps the most conspicuous. It was originally founded by one of the Moorish kings, after the conquest of the kingdom of Granada, and became, in process of time, the favorite residence of a long line of princes,

by whom it was enriched with the spoils of conquest, and all the embellishments which wealth could supply. Nothing, indeed, that imagination could devise, or human industry effect, was omitted, to render it a retreat worthy of the Moorish sovereigns of Granada.

Ages have gone by since its foundation, kingdoms have been overthrown, and whole generations have passed away, but the Alhambra still remains a proud record of the Moslem's power. It is the last monument of their glory, amidst the changes that have long since taken place, and that still proclaim their fall.

The city commands an extensive view of the surrounding country, and the eye wanders with delight over the picturesque and varied scenery which opens on every side. Far as the eye can reach, a fertile plain teeming with life exhibits nature in her most lovely and fascinating forms; large flocks and herds are seen browzing and disporting amongst the luxuriant herbage, while the distant quiet villages interspersed throughout

the landscape, are thrown out in bold relief by the dark green foliage in which they are embosomed. Here the orange-flower and the jasmin of the gardens, decked in all the pride of cultivation, load the air with their grateful perfume; and sparkling jets of limpid water, thrown aloft from fountains of alabaster, impart a continual freshness and beauty to the scene, whilst they contribute to dissipate the languor which in this luxurious climate softly steals over the senses.

After dwelling with delight upon this living landscape of happiness and tranquillity, the feelings of the beholder are aroused by the imposing aspect of the Sierra Nevada. The never-varying hue, the sameness of desolation exhibited by these gigantic mountains, offer a striking contrast to the glowing and lively tints of the surrounding country. On their lofty summits the clouds appear to have fixed their abode; and in their inhospitable regions no living thing can dwell.—Still barren and dreary they remain, in the very bosom of luxuriance and cheerfulness; throughout the

vicissitudes of climate and season they are for ever the same.

Granada was the last strong hold of the Moors in Spain. They had for seven centuries defied the power of different Christian sovereigns, who by unremitted efforts slowly and progressively regained those territories which had been suddenly wrested from their ancestors. Indeed, it required the lapse of ages and a series of successes, wrought by the exertions of many a distinguished warrior, to recover those possessions which had been thus lost by the weakness of a king, and the treason of a prelate. (1)

Ferdinand and Isabella, happily uniting by marriage the crowns of Arragon and Castile, consolidated the power and gave a new impulse to the energies of the Christians. After a variety of minor advantages, they resolved to lay siege to Granada, fortunately at a time when that city was a prey to civil dissentions, occasioned by the rival families of the Zegris and Abencerrages. The Moors, gradually weakened by their domestic

broils, offered but an inadequate opposition to the enemy, who pressed them, on this account, with increasing ardour. After a protracted siege of eight months, in which a host of warriors distinguished themselves, Granada, the royal residence of the Moslems for seven hundred years, surrendered, and the banner of the Cross streamed triumphantly over the turrets of the Alhambra.

The Moors seemed satisfied with their new masters, and the partial change of government which ensued; so that King Ferdinand returned to Seville, leaving the subdued city in apparent tranquillity. This calm was, however, but of short duration. Strong symptoms of disaffection were soon observable in the conduct of the vanquished Moors, and the murmurs of discontent which prevailed in every quarter, shortly terminated in open revolt.

The Archbishop of Toledo, in his intemperate zeal for the conversion of the infidels, had adopted measures which tended rather to increase their natural aversion to the Christian religion, than to wean them from a creed, the mandates of which were in greater harmony with their habits and inclination. The prelate seeing his designs thwarted by the inhabitants of the Albaycin, commissioned one of his officers to arrest those whom he suspected of promoting the opposition. This last ill-advised and imprudent step so greatly exasperated the malcontents, that no sooner did the alguazil proceed to the discharge of his duty, than he became a victim to their fury. Imprecations were first heaped upon him; menaces succeeded; and finally a large stone, hurled from a window, stretched the unfortunate officer lifeless on the ground.

This murder was the signal for open rebellion. The Moors were aware that so flagrant an act could not escape an adequate punishment, and they accordingly prepared themselves for a vigorous resistance. Some of the most daring hurried from street to street, summoning their fellow-countrymen to arms, and exclaiming that the articles of the treaty, in virtue of which they had surren-

dered, were violated, since they could not continue unmolested in the exercise of their religious duties.

This untoward event was the occasion of great anxiety to the Count de Tendilla, who had been entrusted with the government of the city by the queen. He took active measures to subdue the increasing fury of the But desirous of trying the malcontents. effect of negociation before he had recourse. to extremes, he set forth to the rebels, in the strongest light, the criminality and madness of the enterprise in which they had embarked, and the little probability of their ever again struggling with success against the Christian power. All his efforts to restore order proved for some time ineffectual. But the promise of amnesty and redress of their grievances, the well known integrity of the count, and his generosity in sending his lady and son as hostages for the fulfilment of the treaty, induced at length the majority of the rebels to lay down their arms and accept the proffered pardon.

The forty chiefs, however, who had been chosen by the insurgents, considered this conduct as pusillanimous, and despised it accordingly. Dazzled by dreams of ambition, fired with hopes of asserting their independence, and aware that the wild recesses of the mountains afforded facilities for conducting the war with greater security and success; they fled from Granada in the night, and succeeded in instilling their sentiments into the minds of the Moors who inhabited the adjacent country. The towns of Guejar, Lanjaron and Andurax soon rose up in arms; all the mountaineers of the Alpujarras followed the example, and the Christians were threatened with the loss of those acquisitions, which their valour and perseverance had so nobly won.

It is at this interesting period that the following romance takes place; and some of the subsequent events of the rebellion form the historical portion of its subject.

CHAPTER II.

We are up in arms,
If not to fight with foreign enemies,
Yet to beat down these rebels here at home.
Shakspeare.

ALARMING accounts of the resolution taken by the insurgents being communicated to the queen, she lost no time in adopting measures for the preservation of her power. She summoned around her all those counsellors in whose judgment she had ever confided, and those champions on whose valour, in the hour of danger, she firmly relied.

At the upper end of the hall of audience in which they were now assembled, was seen

the queen seated on a magnificent throne, over which was suspended a rich canopy of crimson velvet. Isabella could scarcely be considered at first sight as one born to command: her stature was not above the middle size; but there was a certain air of dignity which pervaded her every action. The mildness which beamed in her bright blue eye seemed rather to act as a persuasive to the observance of her mandates, than as a command, and her displeasure was manifested more by reproaches than by threats. women could boast of greater personal attractions—none a better regulated mind; if fault there were, it might be traced in the cloud which darkened her brow, when a consciousness of what was due to religion stood most prominently forward. At such times she became severe and abstracted; and yet her occasional austerity could hardly be condemned by her subjects, when it led to that firmness and courage, and that inflexibility in the decrees of justice, for which she was so remarkable. If the grave historian has stamped her

character with these attributes of heroism. what scope may not be allowed to the writer of historical fiction? Distinguished by his noble bearing and his honorable station, on the right hand of the queen stood the renowned Alonso de Aguilar, the terror of the Moorish name. He had, like his brother, the heroic Gonzalo de Cordova, particularly distinguished himself in the wars Granada, and was honored with the regard and unlimited confidence of Isabella. Of a lofty and imposing stature, he united with gigantic strength an air of dignity which well became the most accomplished warrior of the His noble countenance wore an expression of resolution and intrepidity, blended with openness and candour, that inspired the beholder with sentiments of awe and admira-His fine athletic form was rendered more interesting from its still retaining the elasticity of ardent youth, unsubdued by the chill of fifty winters, which he had chiefly spent in the toils of the camp. His character bore out the impression thus formed in his favor. The active courage of his earlier days was chastened, not subdued, by the experience of a more mature age; whilst the furrows on his manly brow, and the few gray locks that slightly silvered his raven hair, heightened the feeling of respect and veneration which his many virtues were so well calculated to inspire.

On the opposite side stood Don Iñigo Mendoza, Count de Tendilla, Governor of Granada, a man who had numerous claims to the gratitude of Spain.—Nor was it the least, that of being father of a son, who afterwards served his country in the triple capacities of a valiant soldier, an enlightened statesman, and a profound scholar.

Near these warriors were seen the Master of the Order of Calatrava, the Aleayde de los Donceles, Count Ureña, and other renowned chiefs. The rest of the nobles, taking precedence according to their rank, completed this imposing assembly.

An universal silence prevailed, and every one seemed impatient to ascertain the object

of the council to which they had been so hastily summoned, the nature of which they could only conjecture.

But from these noble ranks, a gallant knight was absent—one who, though young in years, was already a veteran in military achievements, and whose brilliant abilities had won him the right of sharing with these distinguished personages the marked favor of his sovereign.—Gomez Arias was not there, and Alonso de Aguilar, who considered him already as his son, felt chagrined at his unavoidable absence.

This young nobleman was now a voluntary exile from court, and nowise anxious to appear at Granada, where his presence would be attended with danger. Neither his own merits, nor the influence of Aguilar, could induce Isabella to deviate from the path of justice, loudly demanded by the family and friends of Don Rodrigo de Cespedes, who, at that time, was stretched on a bed of sickness, in consequence of a dangerous wound inflicted by Gomez Arias,

his fortunate rival in the affections of Leonor de Aguilar.

The members of the council. with this solitary exception, being assembled, the queen rose to address them.—" Noble Christians," she said. "my friends and brave defenders! You are no doubt already aware of the important motive which summons you to our presence. Unless a speedy remedy be applied, we are threatened with the loss of those territories for which we have so long toiled, and which have been purchased with the dearest blood in Spain. Again the noble patriotic fire which animates you must be called forth, and the redoubled strength of your arms be displayed against the enemies of our faith and native land. Scarcely had you, by courage and perseverance, reduced this last strong hold of Granada, and compelled the Moors to surrender the inheritance of our forefathers, when the seeds of discontent were sown, and sprung into open rebellion. Whatever may have been the complaints of the inhabitants of the Albaycin,

it was by calm remonstrance, and by applications to our throne of justice, that they ought to have sought redress: not by the force of arms, in which they have had but too many occasions to acknowledge our superiority. -Our officers of justice have been insulted, and one of them has been murdered in the discharge of his duty. The prudent and active conduct of the Count de Tendilla succeeded in putting down the first commotion, but the leaders of the outrage have sought, in the wild passes of the Alpujarras, to conduct by stratagem a war which they are not able to sustain against us in the field. us then hasten to chastise their insolence before the evil gain ground. Not that I entertain any doubts of success, but for the purpose of saving the valuable lives which such procrastination might endanger. Amongst the rebel chiefs, who appear to possess in the greatest degree the confidence of their comrades, and most resolutely to defy our power, are el Negro,* of Lanjaron, and el Feri de Benastepar. The former, blockaded in the

The Black.

Castle of Lanjaron, will not long brave a siege; but the latter is a more formidable enemy, and being well acquainted with the innermost passes of those wild mountains, will offer a greater resistance. Against this man, therefore, our chief efforts must be directed."

She then took a banner, on which was splendidly emblazoned the arms of Castile and Arragon.—"To thee, Don Alonso de Aguilar," she said, "do we intrust the chief command in this expedition, and to thy care and keeping do we commit this precious gage, which thou must fix on the summit of the Alpujarras."

Saying this, she delivered the standard to the veteran warrior. He bowed on receiving it, and the fire of enthusiasm kindled in his dark eyes as he knelt, and kissed the hand of the donor; then waving the banner on high, he exclaimed—" All that human efforts can achieve, will I do. My Liege, from your hands Alonso de Aguilar receives this pledge of royal favor, and he will not prove ungrateful for the noble distinction. Yes, I

will punish these accursed infidels, and this sacred standard shall not be separated from me till it streams in triumph on the summit of the mountain. Noble warriors," he continued with a burst of exultation—" if this banner be lost, search for it in the midst of slaughtered Moors—there you will-find it, dyed in the blood, but still in the grasp of Alonso de Aguilar."

As he uttered these words, he again raised the banner on high, and the surrounding chiefs sent forth, simultaneously, a shout of approbation. Isabella then motioning with her hand to command attention, again addressed the council.—"Listen further to our sovereign decree. From this time let no one of our subjects hold communion or any intercourse whatever with the rebels. The least infringement of this order shall be accounted treason, and the transgressor shall be dealt with according to the law. Let an edict be proclaimed, that no one may plead ignorance of its purport."

The chiefs now gradually withdrew; and

Don Alonso having made his obeisance, was likewise about to retire, when his royal mistress detained him.—"Stay, Aguilar. It grieves me much that the marriage of thy daughter should be thus deferred, nay, perhaps set aside, by the unfortunate adventure of her lover with Don Rodrigo de Cespedes. How is the wounded man?"

"Most gracious Queen"—replied Don Alonso, "I have received intelligence that he is even now considered almost out of danger. The issue of a few days will determine, and then if the result be favorable, I may safely welcome the return of Don Lope Gomez Arias."

"As good a knight as Spain can boast"—
returned the queen—" and possessed of those accomplishments which insure the favor of our sex. But I hear he has a failing, which, as a woman, I ought rather to call a grievous fault. I am told he is of a very fickle character. Is not your Leonor alarmed at the reported inconstancy of her future husband?"

"Is she not the child of Aguilar?" proudly cried the warrior—"And where is the man that dared wrong one of that name?"

"Nay," replied Isabella, in the most condescending tone and manner, "I do not mean that Leonor will repent her choice when once made; she has attractions to fix the most volatile and inconstant of men; and I sincerely hope that Gomez Arias will have discernment sufficient to appreciate them."

"Don Lope is not so fickle as some have wished your Highness to believe," observed Don Alonso. "Moreover, I use no compulsion; they love each other well, and I only am concerned that their marriage should not be celebrated before I march against el Feri de Benastepar. In the face of danger I would then feel tranquil, from the consciousness that there was one to protect my child, should aught happen to her father in this hazardous expedition."

"The daughter of Don Alonso de Aguilar"

—replied the queen—"can never need one to supply her father's place whilst Isabella lives. She shall remain constantly with me, and I shall be gratified to manifest by my attention and kindness to Leonor, the high estimation in which I hold her father. But how does it happen that you are not the Mantenedor of the lists in the games of to-morrow?"

"One more capable than myself has already assumed the charge. Besides, I can feel little interested with the display of a tournament, when we are shortly to meet the enemy in mortal encounter. These sports suit well with gay young cavaliers, but not with veterans like myself. Those gallant knights have admiring ladies to look upon their prowess, and reward their success. But my only ambition is to sustain the laurels earned in bloody fray against the enemy of my country,—to gain the approbation of that country, and the favor of its greatest ornament,—my noble sovereign."

The resolute and manly tone in which

Don Alonso spoke, perfectly accorded with the frankness and generosity of his character. He bent his knee as he pressed to his lips the extended hand of his queen.

"And well hast thou deserved that favor," she exclaimed, "my best, and most faithful friend: thy country will pay with gratitude thy long proved services. Go; prosper in thy brilliant career!"

The remainder of the day was passed in preparations for the games of the morrow. Gallant knights were busily engaged in preparing their accoutrements, and examining their armour, whilst many a fair hand was as anxiously occupied in ornamenting the devices, and arranging the colours of the favored knight. The city was thronged with visitors, the inhabitants of the adjacent country having been attracted by the fame of the reported games, insomuch that Granada could not hold her numerous guests. For more accommodation, numerous temporary tents had been pitched along the smiling plain of the Vega. The voices of vacant joy and revelry were heard on all sides, and the warriors and irregular groups, moving along in all the recklessness of anticipated pleasure, presented a gay and lively picture.

CHAPTER III.

Cada uno dellos mientes tiene al so, Abrazan los escudos delant los corazones: Abaxan las lanzas abueltas con los pendones; Enclinaban las caras sobre los arzones: Batien los cavallos con los espolones, Tembrar quierie la tierra dod eran movedores.

Poema del Cid.

THE morning arrived, and the entrances to the lists were thronged by the inhabitants of Granada and their visitors; all anxious to witness a display which it was expected would surpass in magnificence any thing of the kind they had ever seen. A large piece of ground, perfectly level and free from impediment, had been appropriately chosen without the

walls of the city, for the exhibition of the games of strength, valour, and skill, and a temporary gallery had been constructed, extending on either side to the extremity of the lists. At the end nearest the city, was erected a temporary wooden fortress, painted in imitation of stone-work, curiously fabricated, covered over with canvas, and capable of containing a number of men-at-arms. the front turret of this castle streamed a large banner, on which was emblazoned a red cross decorated with gold, being the arms of the order of Calatrava, of which the Mantenedor* was the grand master. Other smaller banners were placed around it, and they appertained to the four knights, who had volunteered to support the Mantenedor, and who, in conjunction with him, were bound to accept the challenge of all knights adventurers disposed to encounter them. On each side of the castle were two tents, before which were placed the pennon and shield of the knights to whom they belonged, and at-

^{*} Champion of the Lists.

the entrance stood a squire, ready to meet the demands of all comers.

Directly facing the castle, at the other extremity of the lists, was pitched a large and magnificent pavilion, ornamented with little pennons, and numberless armorial devices curiously interwoven with gold and silver thread on green silk brocade. Before it were artificially grouped swords, lances, shields, and every description of armour, emblematical of the intent to which the pavilion was appropriated, it being set apart for the use of those knights who were willing to enter the lists against the Mantenedor and his as-About the middle of the gallery on the right of the castle, a platform had: been erected for the accommodation of the queen and her retinue. It was covered with scarlet cloth, and shaded by a rich canopy of purple brocade, on the top of which were seen the royal and united arms of Arragon and Castile shining in burnished gold. The whole of this platform was occupied by the maids of honour, and other principal ladies,

as well as the noblemen and gentlemen of the court. In front of the place occupied by the queen, were stationed the umpires of the tournament, whose duty it was to decide the merits of the candidates, and award the prizes. Other places on either side of the throne were allotted to the various nobility and gentry of Granada, whilst the two extremities of this gallery and the whole of the other were assigned to the public, without any claim to precedence, but that of a priority of occupation.

And now the ponderous bells of the cathedral filled the air with their tolling; and immediately the bands of martial instruments within the lists, struck up a glorious and enlivening strain, in signal of the queen's approach.

At length she made her appearance, surrounded by a numerous suite, and heartily was she welcomed by the multitude, whose joy at the sight of their beloved sovereign was equal to the anticipated pleasure of the tournament. Isabella was sumptuously attired in a rich dress of crimson velvet, ornamented with pearls. A delicate and costly scarf, of the finest lace, was attached to the back part of her head, and covered with its graceful folds her beautiful neck and shoulders. On this splendid scarf were wrought in gold thread, lions and castles, and other insignia of the arms of Spain. The queen wore likewise the crosses of the orders of Santiago and Calatrava, richly studded with diamonds and precious gems of immense value.

The lists now offered a most dazzling and noble spectacle. On one side was displayed all the splendour of the court, and the sparkling jewellery, the costly attire, and the waving plumes indicated the spot where the rank and beauty of Spain was assembled in all its glory and magnificence. Indeed towards this part of the lists the attention was more particularly directed, as in all courteous exhibitions of martial prowess, the interest is chiefly centered in those objects, to win whose smile lances are broken and helmets shiver-

ed.—Nor was the feeling of enthusiasm on beholding this scene lessened by the appearance of the opposite gallery, which, though more humble, nevertheless contributed, by the variety and gaiety of their costume, together with the cheerful animation expressed in their countenances, to the general effect of the picture. Then the proud display of all the panoplies of the court; the rich waving plumage of the crests; the lustre of the burnished shields and polished armour, together with the neighing of the spirited charger that caracolled the lists, and the warlike strains that at intervals floated on the air, powerfully tended to strike the imagination and inspire the heart to deeds of chivalry and arms.

A flourish of trumpets and clarions now indicated that the tournament was about to commence. In a few moments therefore the lists were cleared, with the exception of the heralds, who, gorgeously equipped in suits of crimson and gold, and attended by trumpeters, advanced to the four corners of the lists to proclaim the challenge. It was couched in

the formula of chivalric language, which it would be superfluous here to transcribe. The meaning, however, was, that the Mantenedor and his supporters, Don Manuel Ponce de Leon, the Alcayde de los Donceles, Count Cifuentes, and Don Antonio de Leyva, invited all knights adventurers to break lances, if they were hardy enough to dispute their right to the lists. As soon as the challenge had been pronounced, the heralds retired to their posts; when the trumpets sounding again, the gates of the castle were thrown open, and the five challengers came forward.

Nothing could surpass the richness of their harness, the splendour of their armour, and the gallantry of their bearing. The grand master was attired in a costly suit of steel, the corslet of which was entirely burnished with silver, and the ornaments chased with the same precious metal. Over this he wore a short mantle of white velvet, which was the colour he had adopted. On his shield, upon a field argent, was pourtrayed the red cross of Calatrava, which he also bore on his

breast, and which was surrounded with the following device—" Por esta y por mi Rey."*

Don Manuel Ponce de Leon next fixed the attention of the spectators; his armour was the same as the Mantenedor's, excepting that the ropa to which hung from his shoulder was crimson. On his ample buckler were emblazoned the bars of the arms of Arragon, granted to his warlike ancestors by the kings of that country; and likewise quartered thereon, was a lion rampant, in field argent, a device which, tradition says, was adopted by the famous Trojan, Hector, from whom the old French chroniclers assert the Ponces de Leon to be descended. Beneath the arms was legible in red letters the motto—" Soy como mi nombre." ‡

The armour of the other knights was made to correspond with that of the *Mantenedor*, the only distinguishing mark being the colour of the *ropus*, and the different device which each bore upon his shield, either as indicative

For this and for my King, † A kind of small mantle.
 ‡ I am like my name.

of his feelings, or from the armorial bearings of his family. The colour of the spirited chargers of these challengers was snow white. Nothing could exceed the beauty of their proportions and the splendour of their trappings. They beat the ground with short quick tramp, and shook the white foam from their mouths, as they fretted at the discipline by which their fiery ardour was restrained. They were caparisoned with long housings of costly brocade, and ornamented with gold or silver, according to the colour of the rider's dress, and their manes and tails were decorated with knots of gay ribbons.

The five challengers now advanced at a stately pace, till they arrived before the queen, when, with a graceful and simultaneous motion, they made their horses kneel down; and after saluting the courtly retinue with their lances, they caracolled round the lists, as if to reconnoitre their dominions. At last, after various martial evolutions, in which they were accompanied by the animating strains of the music, they proceeded to

the middle of the lists—there they halted, and, throwing down their gauntlets, retreated to the castle in the same order in which they The trumpets then sounded, had advanced. and immediately there was a rush of gallant knights, who pricked into the lists, all eager to take up these tokens of defiance. So upon retiring, five of their number, who had succeeded in securing the gage, came forward from the pavilion. The champions were fine Spanish shirts of mail, with a polished breastplate inlaid with gold, and their pliant barbs of raven black, seemed to have been chosen to contrast with those of the challengers. The helmets of the knights were almost hidden in a shadowing plumage of white and red feathers. The chief of this gallant band declined giving his name, though he was known to his four companions, who pledged themselves for him. However, from superior courage and address which the strange knight afterwards displayed, it was generally believed that he could be no other than the renowned Gonzalo de Cordova, who, from a pique in a momentary fit of

passion, had withdrawn from court, and lost the friendship of the queen. The other four knights were easily distinguished by their devices and colours. Amongst them, the most conspicuous, appeared the young Don Pedro, son of Don Alonso de Aguilar. He carried himself with a bearing far superior to his years, and inspired a general interest, both on his own account and for that of his illustrious sire. On his shield he bore a golden engle, emblematical of his name, flying towards heaven, and carrying in his claws a bleeding Moor. Underneath was the motto—

" Le subiré hasta el cielo, Porque dé mayor caida."*

This shield belonged to Alonso de Agular himself, who was no less pleased than surprised that his son should have chosen such a device for the occasion. But every one applauded the young Don Pedro for that unconquerable hatred towards the enemies of

I will bear him to the skies,
 That he may have the greater fall.

his country, which he had inherited from his ancestors, and which engrossed their thoughts even in pastimes and games. By the side of Don Pedro, rode Garcilaso de la Vega, who was proud to bear the brazen shield which he had inherited from his father, and upon which was displayed the bleeding head of a Moor, hanging on a black charger's tail, and round which were the words-" Ave Maria"-a device which the Garcilasos wore in commemoration of the famous single combat which one of their house had sustained against the fierce Moor Audala, who, with impious insolence, had interwoven the sacred salutation to the virgin, in token of derision, in his horse's tail. The two other champions were the Count de Ureña and young Sayavedra, both equally renowned in that age of chivalry, brave and gallant knights.

They now proceeded to the castle, and after the ceremony of striking twice the gong which was placed beside it, and selecting their tents, they again retreated. The five

challengers next presented themselves, and a desperate encounter was anticipated. Indeed ten more valiant knights were scarcely to be found in all Spain, and their acknowledged skill promised a display of more than usual interest for the beholders.

At the signal given, they rushed inpetuously forward, yet such was their perfection in horsemanship, and so well trained and disciplined were their chargers, that they all arrived at the middle of the lists at the same time, meeting in a shock, the abrupt and fearful clash of which seemed as if it had been the effect of a single but awful concussion. The lances were splintered to the very hilts, but the knights resumed their places amidst the loud applause of the multitude. Again they darted with the velocity of the wind, and again they met with the same precision, but not with the same success; for in this encounter the challengers were considered the victors—the two chiefs alone having sustained no injury—their lances broke as before, but they remained firm and erect in

their saddle. Not so with the rest—for young Don Pedro was not able to withstand the superior force of Ponce de Leon's more manly age. Garcilaso was unhorsed by Don Antonio de Leyva, and the two others sustained great inconvenience from the Alcayde and Count Cifuentes.

The shouts of the spectators, and the flourish of instruments, proclaimed the victory of the Mantenedor and his supporters, who retired to the castle with their good fortune, ready to meet the demands of all other The chief of the vanquished adventurers. party who had so handsomely maintained his ground against the Maestre, now signified his intention of encountering that champion singly; but in this he was opposed by the marshals of the games, who declared that after the demand of his challenge had been acceded to, he could not, according to the rules, encounter again the same knight on that day. The matter was referred to the judges, who decided against the stranger chief, and he was accordingly obliged to desist from his purpose.

Great was the joy of the Mantenedor and his associates, who, having vanquished the most formidable knights, proudly imagined that all who might now appear, would afford an easy victory. Indeed this opinion seemed generally to prevail, as for some time no one shewed himself in the lists to dispute their supremacy.

Don Pedro, vexed at heart, now mounted a strong charger—rode up to the castle, and challenged the *Mantenedor* himself. Don Alonso de Aguilar saw the noble daring of his son at once with pleasure and dismay; for although he was overjoyed to perceive him possessed of such undaunted courage, he yet trembled for the consequences of his temerity.

The gong sounded twice—the Maestre appeared, and was struck at the presumption of the young adventurer.—They took their places—the trumpets gave the signal—forward the champions started, and at the first meeting displayed such an equality that the whole place rung with acclamations. Indeed this was the most important encounter, and every one waited its issue in breathless ex-

pectation—the ladies in particular, always interested where youth dares against manhood, waved their kerchiefs and scarfs to animate the young knight, whose heart in sooth needed no such stimulus. In the second encounter, however, he was not equally fortunate; for the *Mantenedor*, jealous of his fame, now risked against a youth, stood more on his guard, and summoned all his might and skill to his assistance.—Don Pedro was unable to withstand the shock; the lance flew unharmed from his grasp, and he was compelled to leave the field honorably, but still in possession of the challengers.

The castle now sent forth a blast of clarions, in sign of triumph and defiance, whilst at the pavilion, no knight evinced any desire of renewing the engagement. In this state of suspense, some time elapsed, and the heralds, according to form, proceeded to summon the knights adventurers, but no one appeared—again ten minutes elapsed, and a second summons was pronounced, but again it met with no answer. The triumph of the *Mante*-

nedor now seemed certain, and the heralds were about to utter the third and last proclamation, when, lo! a knight was seen riding at full speed towards the lists, and, after thundering at the barrier for admittance, without further ceremony, was directing his course to the castle, when his career was arrested by the marshals, as no one could pretend to enter the lists against the challengers, without previously delivering his name and titles, or at least presenting a known friend to vouch for his being a true and loyal knight.

The incognito knight was accordingly obliged to give way; but making a sign to the herald not to proceed to the third summons, he rode up to Don Pedro and, taking him aside, conferred with him in secret. Young Aguilar immediately advanced with visible surprise and pleasure, and pledged himself for his new companion. This circumstance, no less than the general appearance of the champion in question, commanded universal interest and attention. He was completely

accoutred in a blue steel armour, over which he wore a short mantle of black velvet, sumptuously adorned with gold. On his burnished helmet he wore a profusion of white and sable feathers, and on his lance streamed a pennon of the same colours. His breast was covered with a ponderous shield, bearing no device, but the solitary motto—"Conocelle por sus fechos."* The incognito knight brought with him neither squire nor page, and there was an air of mystery about his person that tended considerably to heighten the interest which his sudden appearance had already excited.

He now rushed impetuously towards the castle, when the charger seemed to be under no command, and the knight was apparently in peril of being dashed to pieces;— a simultaneous cry of terror burst from the surrounding multitude, when the incognito knight on the point of being hurled against the wall of the castle, and at the distance of scarcely two feet, suddenly reined up, and

^{* &#}x27;Know him by his deeds.

both he and his charger appeared rooted to the ground. A burst of admiration now superseded the terror which his precipitous career had occasioned, and every one was lost in conjectures relating to the incognito knight. The noble arrogance of the motto-" Conocelle por sus fechos," made them better appreciate the feat he had just performed. He advanced to the gong, and sounded a redoubled and protracted peal, and flourishing his lance in the face of the castle and tents, indicated his willingness to do battle with all. This daring act excited a second burst of applause, and the astonished challengers appeared at the castle in a mood of mixed perplexity and indignant pride. The incognito knight, however, vaulted on his charger, and then retreated to await the pleasure of the Mantenedor; who, according to rank, was the first to engage. The flourish of trumpets acted as a signal, and the champions rushed against each other at full speed; the shock was tremendous—the lances were shivered, and the powerful chargers staggered

with the violent concussion. The champions taking new lances, prepared for a second encounter, when the horse of the *Mantenedor*, either from sudden fright or other cause, swerved in the middle of its career, and its master, being obliged to deviate from his intended aim, would have offered an easy victory to his antagonist. The knight, however, generously refused to take advantage of this accident, and, making a demi-volte, returned to await the *Mantenedor*'s leisure. But the latter, overcome by the courteous behaviour of his adversary, declined a second encounter, and retired to the castle.

Don Manuel Ponce de Leon next advanced, happy in the opportunity which chance offered him of gathering the laurels, which his principal had forgone. This knight, in the opinion of many, was the most formidable of the five challengers—the repeated single combats in which he had engaged against the Moors, and other feats of arms, having won for him very great reputation. He came therefore into the lists, as if conscious of his

powers, and fully confident of success. first shock, there was a slight advantage on his part, having succeeded in striking his lance so forcibly, and directly on the breast-plate of his adversary, that the incognito knight was observed somewhat to stagger; while Don Manuel remained immoveable as a rock -however, as no decided advantage could be claimed, the two champions prepared to renew the engagement. Again the swiftfooted steeds fly over the lists, and again the combatants meet with a terrific clash. proved unfortunate for Ponce de Leon, who was dealt such a severe blow, that had it not been for the extreme goodness of his armour, the queen would have lost one of her most gallant warriors. As it was, the saddle girths broke, and the horse, unable to withstand the shock, staggered backward-tottered, and rolled over, throwing his rider, with a tremendous fall, into the middle of the lists. Ponce de Leon with difficulty arose, having received a sore contusion, and was assisted back to the castle, from whence the Alcayde de los Donceles soon issued forth, intent upon revenging the disgrace of his companion. He offered, however, a faint resistance; for the incognito knight, at every encounter, appeared to acquire new strength. opposition afforded by Count de Cifuentes was still weaker; the unfortunate knight being fairly unhorsed in such a manner, that he seemed for a moment to be carried on the point of his antagonist's lance to the ground. The shouts of the spectators, and the peal of instruments redoubled at every new proof of strength and skill thus manifested, and the triumph of the incognito knight was hailed as certain. He had now only to meet the youngest; and, to the opinion of all, the least renowned of the challengers. Young Don Antonio de Leyva, however, by the martial and undaunted manner in which he came forward, showed that he was in no ways intimidated by the repeated and extraordinary good fortune of the doughty champion.

The trumpets sounded—the lances are couched—the horses started—the silence is

intense-when, with one fearful resounding clash, the knights meet-the charm is broken, and all is converted into an uproar of wonder and delight.—The champions, though so unequal in all appearances, now proved to befairly matched—both lances descended from the air in splinters, and the tremendous shock which the combatants had sustained, appeared to produce no other effect than to check their. steeds in their impetuous course. The knights: soon recovered and regained their stations.— Again the signal is heard—and again they speed with the swiftness of the arrow—the lances break, and both the horses recede with the violent shock.—Surprise and delight agitate the bosom of the spectators.-Hope inspires the drooping spirits of the Mantenedor and those of the castle.—Disappointment and vexation rage in the heart of the incognito knight. He made a movement of impatient anger, as he grasped firmly the lance which was now presented to him, and poised it as if to ascertain its consistency; then, making a circuit with his steed, he appeared resolved

to put a termination to the hopes of his adversary in the present encounter.-With a desperate start he rushed headlong against his opponent, who, aware of the furious attack he was about to sustain, collected all his. might to meet it with a suitable resistance.— The incognito knight inclined himself more. forward on his horse, and turned his aim full at the breast of his antagonist, while Don Antonio, who perceived his intention, resolved to direct his lance towards his adversary's head, which, though a difficult manœuvre, would, if successful, insure the advantage.-The incognito knight, however, broke the tendency of the blow by suddenly inclining his head forward, while the anger that boiled within his bosom, so powerfully seconded his efforts, that the gallant Don Antonio fell, bearing, however, his adversary backwards on his seat, and carrying away, on the point of his lance, the plumage that adorned his casque.

The victory was now completed, and the whole place resounded with shouts of admiration. The incognito knight having

thus vanquished the champions, for some time gallantly paraded the lists, making his obedient and tutored steed perform several graceful evolutions. Then suddenly advancing before the throne of the queen, he lowered the point of his lance and made his charger to kneel. Passing onwards to Leonor de Aguilar, he again made the graceful salute, whilst a shower of many-colored ribbons, white and highly-scented gloves, flowers, and other favors, fell profusely from fair hands-a due tribute to bravery and skill. Having performed this mark of courtesy, without waiting to receive the guerdon he had so well merited, he applied spurs to his horse and was soon lost to the sight of the delighted and admiring multitude.

The incognito knight became the subject of general speculation—he had overcome five champions to whom the court of Isabella could afford no equals—only one man perhaps might be capable of such valorous achievements, but he was now an exile whom the law pursued, and whose appearance in the lists would be attended with danger.

Still the extraordinary prowess of the knight, and the circumstance of Don Pedro coming forward to answer for him when he entered the lists, left no room to doubt that he was that illustrious exile. Indeed the significant smile which the queen directed to Alonso de Aguilar, when the champion saluted his daughter, and the blush that mantled on the cheek of that lady implied a perfect recognition of her lover.

His absence from the lists gave the judges an opportunity of awarding the principal prize to Don Antonio de Leyva, by whom, according to their own, as well as the general opinion, it was more justly merited. The different bands now struck up a martial air; the queen departed with her numerous and splendid train, and every one retired from the lists, perfectly satisfied with the sports of the day, to spend the remainder of it in feasting and discussing the various merits of the knights who had afforded them so much pleasure.

CHAPTER IV.

Poi la Vittoria da quel canto stia, Che vorra la divina providenza: Il cavalier non havrà colpa alcuna, Ma il tutto impulterassi à la fortuna.

Ariosto.

The following morning shone equally bright as the preceding, and the expectations of the public were equally sanguine. The same pomp and ceremony presided in the court; the same precision and gallant deportment was observable in the knights, the heralds, and all other persons connected with the sports.

As these, however, as far as concerned the tournament, were but a repetition of the an-

tecedent day, and more to be enjoyed by being an active witness than a passive reader of them, we will not dwell on the subject further than to observe, that those of the castle sustained the 'challenge most gallantly. Although many were the fresh arrivals of adventurers who fearlessly advanced to engage the *Mantenedor* and his comrades, none were sufficiently accomplished to bear away the palm. Indeed, the incognito knight, the most redoubtable of all the combatants, either from fear of discovery, or from some secret injunction, had abstained from making a second appearance in the lists.

The signal was now given, and the heralds proclaimed that the games of valour and strength were ended, and those of skill about to commence.

An interval of two hours was employed in clearing the lists, and preparing the ground for the juego de la sortija,* which was peculiarly gratifying to the queen. This intermediate time was devoted by the as-

^{*} The game of the Ring.

sembled and motley crowd, to the rational, and provident purpose of a substantial repast.

A tall and slight pine tree, beautifully decorated with ribbons, was placed in the ground, and a gold ring of proportion suitable to the occasion, suspended on one of the projecting branches, under which the candidates were to pass at full career. queen herself resolved to reward the victor. with her own roval hand. Her portrait, superbly set in sparkling jewellery, and hanging on a ponderous gold chain of curious workmanship, was suspended by her side—a meet reward for the successful competitor. The nature of the guerdon, the quality of the bestower, and the circumstance that there was but one prize to be obtained, greatly stimulated the emulation of every knight to deserve an honor the more desirable from its admitting of no participation.

Chirimias, dulzainas, (2) and other musical instruments which are now grown obsolete, but which in those days were in high request,

now filled the air with harmony, while the attention of the gay and motley concourse was arrested by the sudden arrival of heralds on horseback, gorgeously apparelled, and preceded by black slaves playing on the cymbals. These paraded the lists for a short time, and then retiring to their posts, gave way to beautiful pages, mounted on elegant palfreys, and attired in costly silken dresses of light blue, bedizened with ribbons, and bearing a turban of crimson velvet with white feathers. These pages carried before them the light and slender lances appropriated for the games, and having deposited them near the queen, they retired and took their stations opposite to the troop of heralds and black musicians.

The attention of the public was then simultaneously attracted to the four corners of the lists, from whence four quadrilles of equestrians proceeded, all vieing with each other in the richness of their dresses, the splendor of ornaments, and the gaiety of their bearing. These quadrilles were distinguished by the

different colours which they wore, and out of each were selected three champions to dispute the prize. At the signal given, they started severally according to the order of precedence, which had been obtained by casting lots, and in the first course seven candidates passed their lances clearly through the ring, carrying it along in their headlong career.

The music sounded a flourish, and the seven competitors underwent another trial, in which only two were successful—young Garcilaso, and Antonio de Leyva. The contest was now to be divided by the two, and pink and green were the colours that contended for the victory; accordingly their quadrilles, as well as the spectators of both sexes who had adopted those colours, awaited the result of the contest, with anxious suspense. Garcilaso now made a graceful curvet, and spring at once with the celerity of an arrow, in the middle of his precipitous career he extended his lance with perfect ease and dexterity, and again carried away the ring.

Don Antonio next advanced; and having indulged for a short space in several feats of horsemanship, he sped towards the honored tree on which was suspended victory or defeat. His horsemanship was so perfect that, excepting the feather on his head which streamed before the wind, all appeared like the figure of a centaur, flying meteor-like along the plain. His lance, however, missed the middle of the ring, and touching one of its edges, such was the rapidity of Don Antonio's motion that the ring sprung high in the air, when the dexterous cavalier, to the admiration of the surrounding multitude. turned short, and before the ring had time to fall, he caught it fairly with his lance. This extraordinary feat excited universal applause, and some even vociferated that Don Antonio was deservedly entitled to the prize. However, as Garcilaso had likewise succeeded in carrying away the ring, the candidates were obliged to refer to another trial, which was decided in favor of young de Leyva, who was immediately escorted by the triumphant party to

receive the reward amidst the exhilarating strains of the music, and the acclamation of the vast concourse.

As soon as the victorious cavalcade arrived near the queen, Don Antonio and the chief of the quadrille vaulted nimbly from their horses, when the conqueror knelt at the feet, of his gracious sovereign, who, with a condescending smile, threw the portrait round his neck.

"Wear this," she then said, "in commemoration of thy skill, and the regard of Isabella. Remember that this gift is a gage of my royal word to accord to the bearer any boon he may have to demand. Upon the presentation of this token it shall be granted. My royal word is passed."

Don Antonio humbly kissed the hand of his queen, and mingling again with his party, they paraded the place in ceremonial triumph, previous to their departure. The feats of De Leyva, both in the tourney and the game of the ring, had secured for him the admiration of all the spectators, and more particularly

amongst the fairer part. Many were the glances bestowed upon him by sparkling eyes and many a gentle bosom beat high with emotion as he inclined towards them his handsome figure in graceful salutations.-Even the proud Leonor could not entirely conceal the inward satisfaction she felt at the triumph of the young Don Antonio; for, notwithstanding her efforts, she could but ill disguise a latent feeling of interest and delight. Certainly it was not love; for, according to general opinion, she had irretrievably fixed her affections on another object. But vet she was in that state of mind which is more easily felt than described; a state too glowing to be called mere friendship—too cold to be denominated love; it was something between both—a tender sentiment of regard towards one whom she was taught to consider her inferior in point of rank and fortune.

Leonor de Aguilar had inherited from her warlike father that pride and loftiness of spirit which in some measure spurned the softer sensations of the heart. She scarcely believed in the existence of unbounded, unconquerable passion; her ideas were too much engrossed in the dazzling visions of glory and fame to descend to a minute analysis of the various gradations of tenderness, and the progressive workings of love.—She seemed to sympathize more with the lofty feelings of her father, than with those of her woman's heart. She had implicitly trusted to him the care of her happiness, and upon his slightest intimation she had consented to receive Gomez Arias as her future husband, and he had too many brilliant qualities not to meet with her approbation.

Gomez Arias possessed in an eminent degree great military talents, and an unbounded desire of glory and renown,—qualities which, in the opinion of Leonor, were paramount to every other consideration. Accordingly, she loved him, as she thought, in a manner worthy of the daughter of Don Alonso de Aguilar.

In this state of mind she awaited the mar-

riage, which had only been retarded by the untoward accident which had unhappily brought the life of Don Rodrigo de Cespedes into mortal jeopardy.

Meantime the extraordinary valour and address which Gomez Arias had displayed in the tournament (for Leonor felt conscious that the incognito knight could be no other), tended considerably to increase her admiration for him, and to enhance her desire of uniting her fortunes to those of a man so well calculated to merit by his services the approbation of his country.

The games being over, various chiefs, such as the Alcayde de los Donceles, Count Cifuentes, and others of equal merit, departed with the forces under their command, to act against the rebels, now daily increasing both in number and strength.

Meantime Don Alonso de Aguilar, on whom devolved the most dangerous part of the enterprize, that of penetrating into the heart of those terrible mountains of the Alpujarras, felt scarcely satisfied with his detention at Granada, as he considered every moment spent in inactivity as lost to glory and renown.

Great, therefore, was his satisfaction when he communicated to his daughter the perfect recovery of Don Rodrigo de Cespedes. Nothing now could prevent the immediate appearance of Gomez Arias at Granada, for the celebration of the nuptials, or throw any impediment on Don Alonso's departure against the rebel Moors. Intelligence, therefore, was sent to Don Lope, who lay concealed at Guadix, that he might repair with the utmost expedition to Granada,-an invitation which Aguilar entertained no doubt would be most anxiously welcomed by that cavalier. Under this impression Don Alonso now turned his thoughts solely to the object that was ever in his mind, and engrossed his every sentiment. Two or three days more and he would be marching against the enemies of his country, and adding new laurels to the flourishing branches that already graced his glorious name.

Meantime his daughter Leonor evinced an equal anxiety for the return of her lover, not so much for any selfish gratification of feeling as for the more noble ambition of claiming the prerogative to call by the endearing names of father and husband, the two first warriors of the land.

Thus impressed, both father and daughter awaited with impatience the following day, which, beyond the possibility of doubt, was to bring Gomez Arias to the city.

CHAPTER V.

Sterling. True, True; and since you only transfer from one girl to another, it is no more than transferring so much stock, you know.

Sir John. The very thing.

Sterling. Odso! I had quite forgot. We are reckoning without our host here.

Clandestine Marriage.

- "What is to be the wonder now?" asked Gomez Arias, as he observed his valet and confidant, Roque, approaching, with an unusual expression of gravity upon his countenance, such indeed as was seldom discernible in the features of the merry buffoon.
 - "What is it you want?"
 - "I wish to leave your service, Señor."
- "Leave my service! Surely, Roque, you are not tired of so indulgent a master?"

- "Yes, Sir," answered Roque, "I am; and what is more, I have been so these three years—may I speak out?"
- "Why," said Don Lope, "you never till now asked leave to be impertinent—but let me hear your complaints."
- "In the first place you are not rich—a grievous fault."
- "How can I help that?" demanded Gomez Arias.
- "Señor, you could have helped it once; but that is passed. Then you play ——"
- "Here's the devil preaching morality," exclaimed his master, with a laugh. "Oh! most conscientious Roque, what are thine objections to this amusement?"
- "To the amusement in itself, none; I am only discontented with the consequences. If you gain, you very composedly enjoy the whole fruits of your success; if, on the contrary, you lose, I get more than a reasonable share of your ill-humours, with which you most liberally indulge me. Now, Don Lope, I should like fair play, if play you will;—

to feel a little more the effect of the first, and not quite so much of the second."

- "Thou art a pleasant sort of a fool, Roque," said Gomez Arias, as he leisurely twirled round his curling jet-black mustachios, and with much complacency eyed his fine figure in a mirror.
- "Thank you, Sir," replied the valet, with a low bow; "but be pleased to consider, that the good opinion you entertain of my talents is unfortunately no adequate compensation for the privations and numberless perils which I undergo in your service. To continue, then, the list of——"
 - " My faults!" interrupted his master.
- "I only say of my complaints," returned the valet: "next to your being a gamester, what I most deprecate is, your military profession, and the fame which you have acquired by your bravery."
- "Good heavens!" cried Gomez Arias, "why thou art precisely complaining of the qualities that most become a gentleman."
 - " But I am no gentleman," pertinently

observed Roque; " and I cannot imagine why I should be exposed to the dangers attendant on heroes, without likewise reaping their rewards."

"I glory in being a soldier," exclaimed Don Lope, a sudden burst of martial enthusiasm glowing on his manly countenance.

"Yes, I have laid low many of the enemies of my country; and before I die I hope often to try my good sword against those accursed and rebellious Moors of the Alpujarras."

"All that is very fine, certainly," said Roque; "but do you know, Señor, that I do not consider the country so much indebted to you, as no doubt you most complacently imagine."

"What!" cried the cavalier, with looks of displeasure.

"Pray be temperate, Don Lope; I do not mean to offend. You have unquestionably done great services to Spain, by ridding her of many an unbelieving Moor; but reflect, Sir, that your sword has not been less fatal to Christian blood. In bat-

the you hew down infidels to your soul's content, and in the intervals of peace, to keep you in practice, I suppose, you take no less care to send the bravest of her majesty's warriors to the grave. Now put this in the balance, and let us consider whether the country does not suffer more by your duels in peace, than she actually gains by your courage in war. But now comes the most terrible of all your peccadilloes—of all my complaints, I mean."

- " And which is that, pray ?"
- "The invincible propensity you have for intrigue, and the no less unfortunate attendant upon it—inconstancy."
- "Inconstancy!" exclaimed Gomez Arias.

 "How should it be otherwise? Inconstancy is the very soul of love."
- "I will not attempt to argue that point with so great an adept; my remonstrances are merely limited to the results, and I can truly aver that my life in time of peace is, if possible, more miserable than in war; for what with carrying love-letters, bribing servants, attending serenades, watching the movements of vener-

able fathers, morose duennas, and fierce-looking brothers, I cannot enjoy a moment's rest."

"Why, 'tis true," said Don Lope, "my life is solely devoted to love and war."

"I rather think it a continual war," retorted the valet. "It may be much to your taste. Sir. but I, that am neither of so amorous a temperament, nor of so warlike a disposition, cannot enjoy the amusement so well. Instead of passing the nights quietly in bed, as good Christians should do, we employ them in parading the silent streets, putting in requisition all the established signals of love, and singing amorous songs to the tender cadences of the love-inspiring guitar. Even this I might endure with Christian resignation, were it not for the disagreeable results which generally terminate our laudable occupations. It often happens that whilst you are dying with love, and I with fear and apprehension, we meet with persons who unfortunately are not such decided amateurs of music. Some surly ill-disposed brother, or unsuccessful lover of the beauty,

is invariably sure to come and disturb our harmony; then discord begins—swords are drawn—women scream—alguazils pounce upon us, and thus the sport goes on, till one of the galanes* is dead or wounded, or till the alguazils are so strong as to render a prudent retreat advisable. Then by some ill fortune I am sure to be collared by the brother or the alguazils in question, and without further ceremony, by way of remunerating merit and encouraging a servant for faithfully serving his master, I am entertained with sundry hearty cudgellings, liberally bestowed on my miserable hide. When they have not left a single sound bone in my skin, they kindly permit me to go, telling me, for consolation, to thank my stars, and that another time I shall not escape so easily. With this pleasing assurance, I creep home as well as I can, and then my humane and grateful master, by way of sympathising with the misfortunes I suffer on his account, fiercely demands—' Roque! where have you been loitering, Sir?' Calls me

[·] Gallants.

a most negligent rascal, and other names equally gratifying, and upon the recital of my tragical adventure, very coolly, and as he thinks very justly, observes—'It serves you right—'tis all your fault—why did you not watch better?'"

"Roque," said Gomez Arias, "you have told me the same story over and over again, and I do not see the necessity of your repeating it now."

"I beg your pardon, Don Lope Gomez Arias," responded the valet, with most ludicrous solemnity, "but I am firmly resolved to quit your service in good earnest; for I perceive you are bent on getting into new difficulties, and I feel no inclination to go in search of fresh adventures. Lately you suddenly disappeared on some mysterious expedition, and I am sure you have been to Granada, to be a candidate in the tournament, notwithstanding the perilous nature of such an undertaking; for had you been discovered!——"

[&]quot; Enough, Roque—that danger is past,"

[&]quot;Very well, Sir; but there are a thousand

others that are not. Will you be pleased to reply to a few questions?

Gomez Arias, to spare any superfluous expenditure of words, nodded assent.

- "How long is it since we left Granada?"—asked the valet.
 - "Two months or so," replied his master.
- "We quitted that city," proceeded Roque, "in consequence of the mortal wounds you inflicted on Don Rodrigo de Cespedes, your rival in the affections of Leonor de Aguilar."
 - " True."
- "We sought a refuge here in Guadix, to lie concealed until the storm blow over."
 - " Right."
- "And you are now creditably employed in gaining the affections of a young and innocent girl, who knows no more of you than she does of his holiness the pope."
 - " Well ?"
- "I don't suppose you intend to marry both these ladies?"
 - "Certainly not."
- "Then it puzzles me to decide how you can reconcile these matters; and as I foresee

that mischief is likely to ensue, you must excuse me if I prudently think of withdrawing before the evil is unavoidable. If fortunately both or even one of your mistresses were a plebeian beauty, I might be persuaded to hush my apprehensions, but as it is I cannot; two ladies of rank are concerned."

Thus far had Roque proceeded in his elequent and moral remonstrance, when Gomez Arias turned round, took up a cane that lay near him, and walking very deliberately to his valet with the most perfect composure—
"Now, Roque," he said, "you must allow I have listened very attentively to your prosing. I have had quite enough of your nonsense for this morning, so I beg you to close your arguments, unless you really wish that I should honor them with a most unanswerable reply."

Here to illustrate his meaning, he very expressively shook the cane, and Roque as prudently retreated; for he knew his master strictly adhered to his word on occasions of this nature.

"With respect to your quitting my service,"

continued Don Lope, "I have no sort of objection, provided that when you part with me, you are likewise disposed to part with your ears, for I have taken such a fancy to you, my dear Roque, that I cannot possibly allow you to quit me, without leaving me behind a token of remembrance. And now," he added in a more serious tone, "withdraw immediately, and mind your business."

Roque made an humble bow and retired. Gomez Arias in this instance, as well as in many others, took advantage of that uncontrolable authority which strong minds generally assume over their inferiors. The valet' had indeed resolved several times to leave his master, for it happened that this same Roque had no particular relish for canings, and other favors of the kind which were liberally administered to him, as a remuneration for his master's achievements. over, he had the nicest sense of justice, and he could not but feel the shocking impropriety of accepting a reward that was unquestionably due to his superiors. it is but fair to add, he never acquiesced in

the obligation, until it was actually forced upon him.

Roque was moreover blessed with a conscience—that sort of prudential conscience which must be considered as a most valuable acquisition. He certainly was not so unreasonable as to expect a spirited nobleman to lead the life of a sequestered monk, nor could he object to his master's intrigues, but he nevertheless found it extremely objectionable that these should not be kept within the bounds of common prudence. could Gomez Arias have limited his gallantries to the seduction of farmers' daughters, or debauching trademen's wives, Roque would most implicitly have approved of the practice, inasmuch as in this case, his master would only be asserting a sort of hereditary right attached to those of his class. to be deceiving two ladies of distinction was really too much for the delicate feelings of the conscientious menial.

Again, Roque could not urge anything against the courage of his master; he only vol. 1.

objected to the effects of its superabundance; for this superabundance, together with Don Lope's unusually amorous disposition, were constantly in opposition with the nicety of Roque's conscience, by reason of the difficulties they gave rise to, in the fulfilment of the natural law of self-preservation.

It is an averred fact that Roque never wilfully put himself in the way of infringing so rational a precept, and most fortunately he was endowed with a quality highly favourable to the observance thereof. A quality which other individuals not blessed with the same scruples, would denominate cowardice.

This is not all: the valet was far from being of a romantic turn of mind; he evinced no taste whatever for moonlit scenery, and nocturnal adventure; and he was vulgar enough to prefer the gross advantages of a sound slumber to all the sentimental beauties of the silvered moon and its appendages.

These considerations dwelt strongly on the mind of Roque, and he had accordingly several times resolved to quit his master, but such was the dominion which Gomez Arias held over him, that the valet's resolutions fell to the ground, whenever he attempted to put them in practice.

CHAPTER VI.

Ma chi'l vede e non l'ama? Ardito umano cor, nobil fierezza, Sublime ingegno—Ah! perchè tal ti fero Natura e il cielo?

Alfieri.

The bloom of op'ning flowers, unsullied beauty, Softness and sweetest innocence she wears, And looks like nature in the world's first spring.

Rowe.

Don Lope Gomez Arias was a man whose will had seldom been checked, and he placed the most unbounded confidence in the magnitude of his resources, physical and intellectual. Nature had indeed been lavished in conferring on this individual her choicest favors. To the most undaunted courage and quickness of resolve, he united the greatest powers of mind, and brilliancy of talent, but he was unfortunately divested of

those genuine feelings of the heart, which alone can render these qualities desirable.

His courage, talents, and abilities, had rendered him an object of dread, not only to the enemies of his country, but to the rivals of his love or ambition. By the men he was generally disliked, feared or envied. Unfortunately the softer sex entertained for him far different sentiments.—Alas! they could not discover the void within his heart, through the dazzling splendour of his outward form, and habitual allurements of manner. had already been the victims of his seducing arts; were they to blame?—perhaps they were only to be pitied. He possessed every resource that professed libertines employ. to inveigle the affections of the innocent maiden, or attract the admiration of the more experienced woman. Besides his courage and resolution - qualities as much more prized by females, as they seldom fall to their share, Gomez Arias was engaging in his deportment and without any alloy of servility in his address; indeed he seemed rather to

command attention, than to court it, and the general expression of his features was that of pride, tempered with the polish of gentlemanly bearing.

In his personal appearance he was remarkably handsome, being of tall and majestic stature, to which his finely turned limbs were in strict proportion. There was an intelligence in the piercing glance of his dark eye, and a smile of mixed gaiety and satire sat habitually upon his lip. To his other attractions he added a set of regular though somewhat large features, which were shaded by a profusion of black glossy curls, and the superb mustachios and pera* that clothed his upper lip and chin.

Such was the principal hero of this tale. Spite of all the resources of his mind, Gomez Arias found himself at the present moment involved in deep perplexity, and much at a loss how to extricate himself therefrom. He had received a letter from Don Alonso de

[•] Pera. The military term is imperial; a small tuft of hair.

Aguilar, father of his future bride, announcing the perfect recovery of his rival, Don Rodrigo, and urging a speedy return to Granada. But, unluckily, Gomez Arias felt in no hurry to return. Certainly, Granada was at the time particularly interesting, and far preferable to Guadix. Again, the beauty of Leonor was unrivalled at court-a great consideration to Don Lope. She was rich and of the first rank-greater consideration still; and bearing in mind the influence that her father, the celebrated Aguilar, enjoyed with the queen, a marriage with his daughter would open the road to the highest preferment, and yet our hero felt loath to return to Granada. The blooming Theodora de Monteblanco was then the reigning idol of the moment. She had fixed for a time his errant heart, and it was now that Don Lope perceived the great inconveniency of the unity of man; and certainly a lover of his description ought to be duplex for the opportunity of satisfying both duty and inclination.

In this state of irresolution Gomez Arias

remained for some time. His sacred engagement to Leonor, and the brilliant dreams of ambition that sported before his fancy, could not all chase away the image of Theodora; for in this lovely girl he found all the perfections of his former mistresses, with an absolute exemption from their foibles.

Theodora, at the tender age of seventeen, exhibited already the matured charms of a form voluptuously beautiful, blended with the delightful innocence of manner characteristic of that early stage of life, when the heart is yet unacquainted with guile, and unpractised in the deceits of the world. Her complexion was of a delicate white, without any other colour than that which occasionally mantled upon her cheek when called forth by the sensibility of her feelings, or diffused by the influence of some passing emotion. So lovely and yet so pensive was her countenance that but for the rapturous expression of her large dark eyes, partially revealed through their long silken fringes, and the profusion of sable ringlets which floated with

unrestrained luxuriance over her exquisitely turned neck and shoulders, you might have thought that she had been a master-piece of some divine sculptor, who had successfully imitated, in the purest alabaster, the fairest work of nature.

Theodora loved Gomez Arias with all the enthusiasm of a romantic girl's first love. She felt the most ardent attachment, and could not,—would not conceal it from the object of her adoration. She loved him with the genuine simplicity of a heart incapable of deceit; and, unpractised in the school of worldly prudence, unacquainted with the arts to which more experienced women resort for the purpose of enhancing their own charms, or fixing more firmly the affections of men, she had surrendered her whole soul to her lover with the most confiding innocence, and an implicit reliance on his unbounded return to her tenderness.

This complete devotedness flattered the vanity of Gomez Arias. He beheld an angelic girl who centered all her happiness in his love, and in the ardour of her feelings was incapable of admitting the least alloy of cold calculating precaution. He was charmed with a character cast in the mould of nature, untutored yet by art, and, as amongst his former mistresses he had never met with one so entirely devoted, he returned her love with the warmest admiration.

Gomez Arias was fondly indulging in these pleasing reveries, when his man, Roque, suddenly burst upon him with a look full of information.

- "Well, Sirrah!" cried Don Lope, "what means this intrusion?—Do you still stick to the wise determination of quitting my service? Are you willing to comply with the conditions?"
- "No, Señor," answered Roque, with conscious importance; "I come loaded with fresh proofs of my inclination to serve you."
- "Upon my honor," exclaimed Gomez Arias, "thou art marvellously complaisant, friend—thou hast seen the duenna, I suppose?"

"Yes, Sir, and I have seen some one else, besides."

" Let us hear first of the duenna."

"We must go to night—her master is engaged with a guest from Granada. I saw them leave the house myself."

Gomez Arias lost no time in preparing for the interview; and as night was now coming on, he girded on his sword, and, flinging his cloak carelessly round him, sallied out accompanied by his valet, on his nocturnal expedition.

"Art thou sure, good Roque," he demanded, "that you really saw the old gentleman leave his mansion?"

"Quite sure, Don Lope—my eyes seldom deceive me; indeed I feel perfectly satisfied with their capability. Never was there a more trusty pair, in descrying afar off a father, or brother, or any other kind of unwelcome intruder upon moonlight meetings. Argus, they say, had a hundred eyes, and yet was found at fault, whereas I have only two and ——"

- "They are sometimes as watchful," interrupted Don Lope.
- "Seldom," replied Roque—" and when they unfortunately deceive me, I sorely feel for the deception. I am a man of very tender feelings."
- "Argus," observed his master, "was punished for his negligence, and it is meet thou shouldst experience the same treatment, under similar circumstances."
- "Aye," quoth Roque, "he was changed into a peacock—I wonder into what animal I shall be changed, since this sort of transformation is the retribution attendant on negligent scouts—I think the character of a jackall would suit me best, for I certainly lead the lion to his prey. But now, Sir, leaving jesting aside, I have a little piece of serious information for your ear. Do you know whom I saw in close converse with Don Manuel de Monteblanco when he left his house?"
 - " No, nor do I care."
 - "Don't you, indeed?-Well, it is very

fortunate, for it happened to be no other than your rival, Don Rodrigo."

- " Now, Roque," cried his master jocosely, "here's a convincing proof of the failure of thy boasted eye-sight."
- "Why I really thought so at first myself, and I made the sign of the cross accordingly, but I soon perceived it was no delusion. Now it would be pleasant, should this same Don Rodrigo come upon an expedition similar to your's—it would seem as tho' the man was born on purpose to thwart you."
- "Well," returned Gomez Arias, with a smile—"and it would seem also that I am born to chastise his insolence."

To this, Roque made some foolish reply; for in his capacity of gracioso,* he freely availed himself of the privilege allowed him of giving utterance to every thing that came into his head, whether to the purpose or not.

They proceeded with hasty steps towards the mansion of Monteblanco;—already they

^{*} Jester.

reach the spot, and the moon that sheds a partial gleam over yonder reja,* developes to the sight the outline of a female form. Gomez Arias approaches, and his penetrating glance discerns through the darkness the of his Theodora—her face figure decked in placid smiles, and her frame evinces the soft flutterings of an anxious The bolt of the entrance gently heart. creeks, and the harsh sound thrills like the of heavenly music to the lover's throbbing breast—the door opens at length, and a comely matron far stricken in years welcomes the cavalier. Don Lope is not backward in his advances; a smile of grateful recognition plays upon his lip. He then seizes the good duenna's hand, and presses it in kind acknowledgment.

The trusty Martha showed in her dress and manner, all the outward signs of her state and condition. An imperturbable gravity sat upon those harsh features which were never

^{*} Reja, a small grated window.

known to relax into a smile, and in whose expression predominated a mixture of religious asperity and pride, vainly disguised under the cloak of humility. However, Martha was far from practising the rigid austerities her whole appearance seemed to indicate. She only assumed this outward demeanour, in the same manner that a dastard mimics courage, the better to conceal his cowardice.

Martha was dressed in an ample habit of black woollen cloth, girded her waist with the band of a monkish order, to which was suspended a rosary of huge black counters. A cap of the whitest linen adorned her head, and in all the rigour of female modesty, every part of her neck up to the chin was carefully concealed by a kerchief of the same material.

Gomez Arias rushes forwards, and the next moment finds him at the feet of his mistress. Theodora is happy in the Elysium of love; a thousand tender emotions swell that fond bosom, where an ardent flame burns under the cover of pure snow.—As she gazes on Gomez Arias her melting eye is lighted up with unusual fire, and her whole frame appears gently agitated with a delicious tremor. The smile that quivers on her lip feelingly responds to the ardent glance of her passionate admirer, and the sudden rush of crimson that overspreads her lily cheek bespeaks the thrilling transports of genuine love in the first stages of youthful innocence and delight. Don Lope takes her soft yielding hand, and tenderly presses it to his bosom, he gazes fervently on her countenance; in sweet intoxication he inhales her youthful breath. Caressingly his arm encircles her sylphic waist. She gently inclines her head towards him, and both seemed overshadowed by the long beautiful tresses which float in wild luxuriance. From Don Lope's flashing eye the innocent Theodora drinks large draughts of sweet but deadly poison; a tear of tenderness starts to overwhelm her eye and falls on the lover's hand; a deep sigh escapes her bosom, and they meet in a fervent embrace. Happy !—thrice happy moments !—dear to

the genuine sensibility of humanity, dearly cherished and oft alas! but too dearly purchased! Few words the lovers spoke, for when the heart is replete with rapture, there is an eloquence in silence far above the cold trammels of language. Gomez Arias forgot the dream of future ambition in the reality of present bliss. He was loved, loved passionately by one who was the most perfect pattern of innocence and beauty; loved more than he thought it was in the nature of woman to love. Hope assured its brightest colours, and Don Lope anticipated all the transports of delight possible for man to enjoy. He was supremely happy in expectation; for the expectation of bliss is perhaps even more gratifying than the reality. Thus the rose in its opening bloom, is sweeter than when its charms are expanded to the sight, for the hour of maturity is but the signal of decay. Alas! we eagerly follow the sparkling joy, snatch it with enthusiasm, and it withers in the grasp!

Time sped; yet the lovers still remained as

if entranced in a delightful reverie of love, in the mutual interchange of soft sighs and eloquent glances, when suddenly the door burst open, and Roque rushed in with visible emotion. The faithful Argus came to announce the near approach of Monteblanco and his guest, Don Rodrigo. Gomez Arias, however, could not believe the danger to be so imminent, making due allowance for the valet's timorous disposition; but the good duenna, who had been unpleasantly disturbed at her devotions, now came forward to confirm the fearful intelligence.

Though these unpleasant interruptions are far from being of novel occurrence in the annals of love, and though Gomez Arias was familiarized with their danger, yet when he looked on the duenna's countenance, that faithful thermometer of intrigue, he could not but perceive the impending storm to be more than usually alarming. Deeper wrinkles furrowed her sallow visage; her eye was haggard, and the rosary shook in her withered hand.

- "Holy Virgin! I am lost," exclaimed the affrighted dame. "Ah! Don Lope, this comes of my tender-hearted, complying disposition; there's my reputation sullied with a stain that not all the holy water in Spain will be able to wash away!"
- "But, surely," observed Gomez Arias, "the danger is not so imminent as to preclude my escape."
- "Escape!" quoth the duenna; "it is impossible; they are at this moment on the stairs."
- "Villain!" cried Don Lope, turning fiercely to Roque, "is this the way you do your duty?"

Roque very prudently kept aloof from the contact of his master's hand; and, as if anticipating an explosion, began to stammer forth his excuses. Theodora's countenance was suddenly overspread with a deadly paleness, and the timid girl wrung her hands in an attitude of despair. Her critical situation, and the duenna's alarm, at first staggered Gomez Arias, but with the start of resolution which immediate danger inspires, he as-

sumed a mastery over his emotion, and instantly bethought himself of an expedient to ward off the threatened discovery.

"If Don Rodrigo arrives with Monteblanco," said he, "we are safe; we shall have nothing to fear."

"Nothing to fear!" echoed Roque. "Methinks the danger is doubled when a man has two enemies to encounter, instead of one."

"Silence, fool!" cried his master. "Martha, be calm; affect not to know me; make free use of the organ with which nature has so liberally endowed you, and do not spare your reproaches and abuse. Theodora, keep up your spirits. Roque, be silent, you rascal."

The door opens—Monteblanco and Don Rodrigo enter, but are fixed to the ground in mute amazement at the group that presents itself to their view. The duenna had summoned the courage of despair, and was overwhelming Gomez Arias with a torrent of abuse. Theodora had receded from the light to hide her emotion from her father's

sight, which fortunately was so impaired with age, as not to afford any material impediment to her concealment. Roque assumed an air of saucy assurance, and his master appeared leaning against the wall with the most perfect coolness and self-possession. Don Manuel and his guest stared at the intruders for some time, before either attempted to speak, till at length Don Rodrigo broke silence, with an ejaculation of surprize.

- "Don Lope Gomez Arias!" exclaimed the astonished cavalier.
- "Don Lope Gomez Arias!" re-echoed Monteblanco. "It is your rival, then.— What is the meaning of this, Martha?"
- "Your honor may ask the gentleman himself," responded the duenna; "I know nothing of him, but that he is the most daring and impertinent man"—(Martha indulged in the privilege granted her by Don Lope); "the most unceremonious, head-strong, self-sufficient cavalier I ever met with—Virgen Santa!—What a disturbance he has raised in the house. Then there's

that most impudent rascal of a valet; he is the principal cause of the commotion, and I humbly crave and hope your honor will give him ample reason to repent his impudence."

"Repent my impudence!" quoth Roque,
thou accursed bruja; it would be more meritorious to chop off thyslanderous tongue!"

Here the duenna proceeded to pour forth a fresh volley of words, without any positive explanation, as is generally the practice when people are anxious to gain time, and collect their senses.

"Peace, woman!" interrupted Gomez Arias, in the middle of her harangue; "this disturbance, as you term it, is of your own doing; had you behavedwith more courtesy to a stranger, you might have saved the impropriety my valet has been guilty of towards you; an impropriety for which he shall most assuredly suffer in due time."—Here he cast a terrible look on the astonished Roque, who perfectly well knew he was doomed to suffer for his master's vagaries; and that the failure of his adven-

^{*} Anglice, a beldam.

tures must recoil invariably on his unfortunate head. Yet he looked sorely puzzled how to find out the nature of the impropriety he had committed against the superannuated dame who dealt him such abundance of vilipendiary epithets.

All this time the good Don Manuel was patiently waiting for an explanation, and the more the duenna explained the more perplexed he found himself.

Gomez Arias at last, after several fruitless endeavours to stop Martha's tongue, availed himself of a momentary pause she made to take breath...." Don Manuel de Monteblanco," said he, " is undoubtedly anxious to learn the object of my visit to his house."

"Visit!" exclaimed the duenna. "Intrusion—a downright taking by storm.— God bless me! a visit you call it—a visit!"

"Silence, Martha, silence; let the gentleman proceed," cried Don Manuel, a little more composed, and feeling an inward dread at the matron's explanatory talents.

"Don Manuel," continued Gomez Arias, "I

am exceedingly concerned for the confusion created in the mansion of so honorable a cavalier; but certainly I am not so greatly to blame as that good woman wishes to imply."

"Good woman, indeed!" ejaculated the duenna. "Jesus me valga! that I should live to be so called—soy Cristiana vieja*—and of as good a family as needs be.—No Jewish puddle in my veins.—Good woman, forsooth! My dear master, am I to be called a good woman?"

Don Manuel looked very grave, not so much perhaps at the difficulty of resolving the question, as at the probability of never obtaining a knowledge of the business so long as the duenna had the free use of her tongue; to quiet therefore her anger, the complaisant old cavalier kindly soothed her apparently wounded feelings, by allowing that she by no means deserved the appellation.

Silence being thus restored, Gomez Arias continued: "The cause of my apparent intrusion is simply this:—informed by my servant that Don Rodrigo de Cespedes was in

^{*} I am an old Christian.

active search after me, and not wishing to be backward in acknowledging the favor, I thought it incumbent on my honor to facilitate a meeting with the utmost expedition. I repaired to this house, from whence my servant had seen that gentleman issue, but before the nature of my business could be disclosed, that rigid dame assailed me with a tremendous storm of abuse, when my valet, in his zeal to serve me, or rather indulging in a propensity to retaliate, retorted the lady's freedom of tongue with rather too much acrimony."

"Now," thought Roque, "it is really too bad to accuse me of acrimony when I have not opened my lips."

"I attempted an explanation," continued Gomez Arias, "in the hopes of meeting with a more courteous reception, when this young lady made her appearance (turning to Theodora). I was then about to acquaint her with my intention, when fortunately the object of my search presents himself in person, a circumstance which I hail with the

more pleasure, as I am assured that Don Rodrigo is particularly anxious we should renew an old interchange of tokens of our mutual regard."

"Señor Don Lope Gomez Arias," replied Don Rodrigo, sorely incensed at the tone of levity in which he was addressed by his rival, "I likewise congratulate myself in thus accidentally meeting with Don Lope sooner than I was led to expect, and though the mock courtesy of his style plainly indicates the reliance he places on the constant good fortune that protects him, yet he shall find me more solicitous than ever for the immediate interchange of the tokens to which he so facetiously alludes."

"Señor Don Rodrigo de Cespedes," returned Gomez Arias, "I cannot but greatly admire that laudable ambition which stimulates you to deeds of noble daring, and an unworthy individual like myself cannot feel sufficiently grateful for the honor you wish to confer upon him."

These words and the sarcastic sneer that

accompanied them, exasperated Don Rodrigo to such a degree, that turning to his rival, he pointed to the door, and without further reply intimated to him to follow. Gomez Arias was about to comply, when Monteblanco interposing, exclaimed,

- "Forbear, caballeros, forbear; this is my house, and though I am far from desiring to withhold any gentlemen from the calls of honor, yet let it not be said that my mansion was made a scene of violence and bloodshed."
- "Valgame Dios!" cried Roque, "Don Manuel speaks like an oracle. Nor do I think myself, this hour of night the most fit to decide such important matters. Broad day-light is certainly preferable to the glimmer of the moon and stars, for business like this."

Theodora was ready to sink with emotion and fear, but the very imminence of the danger inspired her with a sort of desperate tranquillity. She knew that her interposition would only increase the perplexities of her situation, without preventing the accomplishment of their design. Besides, she placed much confidence in her lover's courage and superior skill in the management of arms, and ultimately she possessed that nobleness of mind that shrinks from the imputation of cowardice in the object of its admiration.

Monteblanco's remonstrances were vain. Don Rodrigo rushed to the door with desperate haste, and Gomez Arias followed with the coolness of one to whom such scenes were familiar.

"Follow me," cried Don Rodrigo, as he bounded down the stairs with fearful alacrity.

"Stay, Don Rodrigo," said Gomez Arias, sarcastically, "not such precipitation, or you may perchance fall before your time."

This provoking sarcasm entirely overthrew the little remaining temper which Don Rodrigo possessed. His eyes flashed fire, his whole frame shook, and unable to restrain himself any longer, he furiously drew his sword, and fixed on the Zaguan* for the field of action.

^{*} A porch,—the entrance of a building.

"Defend yourself, Don Lope," exclaimed he, with frenzied rage.

"Look to yourself, fair Sir," returned Don Lope, as, unsheathing his rapier, he calmly placed himself in a posture of defence.

With impetuous fury Don Rodrigo darted on his antagonist, and commenced an assault with all the courage and address of a practised swordsman. Thrust succeeded thrust with mortal rapidity, but the active eye of Gomez Arias foiled their deadly aim with consummate skill and dexterity. A demoniac spirit seemed to agitate Don Rodrigo, and he continued for some minutes wasting his strength in the fruitless attack, and impairing his own means of resistance. combat was too fierce to be of long duration. and a few moments would have brought it to a mortal issue (for Don Lope was now in his turn about to press hard his weakened adversary), had not Roque, in that tenderness of conscience for which he was so noted, very adroitly extinguished the light that hung in the Zaguan, as the most effectual way of suspending hostilities.

The place was thus plunged in utter darkness, and Don Rodrigo, afraid of being disappointed in his revenge, called out to Gomez Arias.

"I am here," replied Don Lope; "I am here, Don Rodrigo; the light is superfluous; we shall do perfectly well without it, for a mutual sympathy will lead our weapons aright."

The swords again met, and short, quick sparks of light, like the fugitive flash of a summer's exhalation, gave a momentary glimpse of the combatants' fearful countenances—then a dismal groan is heard, a body falls heavily on the ground, and a shriek of horror burst from the household, who had crowded round the entrance of the Zaguan.

"He is dead," muttered Don Rodrigo to himself, and sought for safety with the swiftness of lightning. "Bring torches," cried Monteblanco; "let us afford the fallen caballero all the assistance in our power."

The state of Theodora baffles all descrip-Ignorant as yet who was the victim, her soul was harrowed up with the most fear ful apprehensions, the reality of which would dash the cup of happiness from her lips, and embitter her future existence. This petrifying, this heart-rending suspense was happily but of short continuance. Theodora herself, with breathless anxiety, was the first to bring a torch, that might perhaps illume the pale ghastly features of him on whom she hadcentered all her felicity. The moment was awful, when the torch throwing a broad around the Zaguan, discovered Gomez Arias, tranquil and erect, in all the assurance of perfect safety. A faint scream escaped from the bosom of his mistress, for all the feelings which horrifying suspense had held imprisoned there, now sought relief in a tumult of sighs and tears. Her emotion, however, was scarcely noticed by her father,

too much occupied at the time in ascertaining which was the fallen cavalier.

- "Don Rodrigo is then the victim," sorrow-fully exclaimed the old cavalier, casting his eyes around; for at this moment he spied a human body, lying in a dark corner of the Zaguan.
- "It moves—it moves!" cried Martha, cross-ing herself.
- "Then he is yet alive," returned Don Manuel; "let us hasten to succour the unfortunate young man; look to his wounds!"
- "Aye," responded the duenna; "let us rather attend to his soul, and behave like true charitable Christians; run, Cacho, run, and call Fray Bernardo, or Fray Benito—no matter whom—any friar will do at such a moment."

Monteblanco and all his attendants hurried to the spot in their eagerness to render assistance to the fallen Don Rodrigo, when, lo! the body with a sudden spring bounds on its legs, and to the astonished eyes of every one discovers the person of Roque.

"What's this? Where is Don Rodrigo?" interrogated Monteblanco.

- "Why," answered Roque, very unconcernedly; "some fifty leagues from hence, I should imagine, by his hurry to get away."
 - "Then he is not dead?"
 - "Not that I know of."
 - "Whence came that groan?"
 - " De este humilde pecador."*
- "Jesus Maria," ejaculated the duenna; "how dare this judio + throw a noble family into consternation?"
- "Now, Señora duenna," quoth the valet, "I rather think I have been instrumental in preventing the noble family from being thrown into that consternation."
- "Roque," interposed here Gomez Arias, "thou art not wounded I perceive."
 - "No, thank God!" replied Roque.
 - "Then thou art a rascal."
- "A rascal because I am not wounded! Good Heaven! here's a consequence with a vengeance!"
- "This is an impudent interference," continued Don Lope, "and dearly shalt thou rue it."
 - From a poor sinner like myself.
 † Jew.

"An impudent interference do you call it? A marvellous good one, in sooth, for I have saved the fruitless effusion of noble Christian blood, and I have separated two enraged combatants better than a whole posse of alguazils: and now, all the reward I am likely to obtain for such an important service, is threats and abuse. Here is my dear master sorely exasperated, because I have a greater regard for his safety than he has himself, and quite disappointed at not being run through the body by that sanguinary Don Rodrigo.

"Basta, basta," said angrily Don Lope;—
then in a gentler tone he continued, "I am
really concerned for Don Rodrigo,—full of
anxiety for my supposed death, I venture to
say he is now flying from the abode of man,
to seek a shelter in the wilderness of the
Alpujarras.

"It is very Christian-like in you, Señor," interposed Roque, "to show so much solicitude for the fate of Don Rodrigo. Well, the ways of honorable gentlemen are to me unaccountable. Here was my honorable

master, but a short while since, eagerly seeking the life of Don Rodrigo at the point of his rapier, and now he is equally anxious that his adversary should not be exposed to the inconvenience of a nocturnal ramble into the mountains of Alpujarras."

Monteblanco could not but inwardly congratulate himself upon the fortunate termination of an adventure which threatened such serious results; for he by no means liked the idea of having a corpse in his house, with all the unpleasant appendages necessarily attendant on such an inmate. He certainly felt concerned for the safety and comfort of Don Rodrigo, but he very judiciously opined it was better his dear friend should suffer the inconvenience of passing a night in the mountains, than that he himself should be exposed to the unpleasant consequences which would inevitably attend a fatal result to either party, especially had the event occurred in his own Zaquan; for he would be thus compelled to take a part in the drama, with which he would very willingly dispense—that

of explaining the catastrophe to the officers of justice. This consideration induced him to approve in his own mind the stratagem of Roque, although he would by no means audibly testify his approbation, thinking very properly that the conduct of inferiors and dependants should never be lauded, even when they are most successful in their services.

Acting upon this charitable principle, he would on no account interfere to prevent the taunts and abuse with which the luckless valet was assailed on all sides. Thus poor Roque had a fresh opportunity of discovering the little a man is likely to gain by following the impulse of a good heart, and the very extraordinary way men have of acknowledging a service, even when they are internally well pleased therewith.

"Begone, thou graceless dog!" exclaimed Don Manuel. "Thy impertinence justly deserves most exemplary punishment from thy master."

Saying this, he took his daughter by the

hand, made a slight bow to Gomez Arias, and was about to retire, when Don Lope stept forward as though he wished to detain him.

"Stay, Don Manuel," said he; "I cannot leave your house, without again expressing my regret for the disturbance I have caused. I sincerely offer you my apologies as an honorable cavalier, and as such I am confident Don Manuel de Monteblanco will accept them. Moreover, I shall make all the atonement in my power; and as it is obvious that my servant is the primary cause of all the mischief, you may rest assured, Sir, the culprit shall not escape without condign and adequate punishment."

Don Manuel expressed himself perfectly satisfied with the apology of Gomez Arias, and most graciously accepted the atonement proposed; then making another bow, not quite so slight as the former, left the Zaguan accompanied by his beautiful daughter, who had already caught the eloquent parting look of her lover, and treasured in her bosom all the tender sentiments it conveyed.

Meantime, Don Lope, well contented with himself, haughtily called to poor Roque—the faithful valet was in a moment ready to lead the way. His master then very composedly returned to his apartments to muse over the adventures of the evening, and form plans for the successful accomplishment of his ulterior projects.

CHAPTER VII.

Pariome a drede mi Madre Oxala no me pariera!—

Quevedo.

No ill luck stirring, but what lights on my shoulders.

Shakspeare.

"BETTER be born fortunate than rich," says an old proverb, and the correctness of this saying was fully exemplified in the life of Don Rodrigo de Cespedes. Indeed, his whole existence had been a series of mischances and unfortunate results; and he appeared especially reserved as a proper subject on whom the fickle goddess might exercise her caprice at leisure.

Why Don Rodrigo should belong to this class, is more than can well be resolved, for

he was possessed of all those qualifications which are calculated to render a man brilliant in society, and amiable in private life. He enjoyed the advantages of birth and wealth; handsome in his person, and elegant in his address. A brave soldier in war, and a courteous cavalier in peace, it appeared natural that his fortune should be prosperous, and yet all those endowments availed him not. On the contrary, they only served to render the ill success of his undertakings the more remarkable.

These anomalies cannot be accounted for on any rational principle; but may perhaps be attributed to the absence of that requisite qualification, which sometimes serves a man in lieu of birth or fortune, and not unfrequently goes further than both these advantages;—it is that most enviable requisite, known under the appropriate, though somewhat vulgar, denomination of good-luck.

Don Rodrigo had paid his addresses to three different ladies, with the moral and highly creditable intention of entering the holy state of matrimony. Perhaps in strict justice it must be confessed, this idea crossed his mind after having completely failed in his attempts to signalize himself as un homme à bonnes fortunes, a sort of ambition which, if not praiseworthy in itself, is nevertheless, when successfully pursued, conducive to the eclat of a man of rank, as well as gratifying to his vanity. Indeed it may be rather suspected, without any great affectation of discernment, that the unlucky Don Rodrigo bethought himself of marriage as a last resource, when ultimately convinced of his inability to succeed in his career of gallantry. But even in this instance, that unrelenting fatality which constantly followed him, could not be persuaded to spare him even in consideration of hymen.

Don Rodrigo had first for a rival a man whose stature was rather under than over four feet, whose features were of the most forbidding kind; his person distorted, and his fortune by no means superior to that of the Don; yet with all these disadvantages, this little monster, to the astonishment of every one, carried off the fair prize.

He next placed his affections on a lady of more humble pretensions, his inferior both in birth and fortune, and by no means remarkable for beauty. Don fondly imagined that his rank and affluence would insure him success; nor did he overlook the advantages nature had given him in a pair of fine eyes, an aquiline nose, well proportioned limbs, a carriage that shewed off these qualifications to advantage, and a degree of personal courage that even his rivals and enemies respected; but his Angelica must have been an admirer of the opposite qualities, as she chose for her husband an obscure plebeian, whom the very sight of a Toledo steel threw into an ague. Disgusted with the bad taste and vulgarity of those he had already courted, he boldly resolved to prefer his suit to the very first lady in the land. accordingly laid siege to the heart of Leonor, but here his pretensions met with as decided a repulse as before, and though his vanity could not have been wounded by having Gomez Arias for his fortunate rival, yet, soured by his repeated crosses, he determined, if he

could not by gentle means succeed in his object, to kill his rival or fall in the attempt: his success in this last exploit the reader will perhaps remember.

Nor was the ill-luck of Don Rodrigo confined to his amours; it extended to all his affairs. If he engaged in a duel, a wound was generally the result; or if he escaped unhurt, though he might have been the injured party, yet by some fatality he was sure to be accounted the aggressor. If he happened to say a good thing, it was invariably attributed to another person, while, if a piece of scurrility or a foolish remark circulated, he never failed to have the whole merit to himself.

We need not, however, go further for instances to exemplify the ill-luck that constantly attended Don Rodrigo. We see him at present a prey to his evil genius. He left the Zaguan of Monteblanco's dwelling with the utmost precipitation. Impressed with the idea that he had killed his rival; and, fully sensible of the necessity of speedy flight, he

hurried to the inn for his horse and valet. anxious to put in practice his prudential resolution, before any impediment could be thrown in his way. On his arrival he asked for his man Peregil; but Peregil, as if on purpose to perplex him, was gone to evening prayers, which Don Rodrigo very naturally interpreted, to the tavern. So he sent a boy there, with instructions where he was to meet him out of the town. He then hastened to the stable. but found, to his unspeakable mortification, that Peregil, in his abundant care, had taken the key. Time being precious, Don Rodrigo, afraid of causing a disturbance, was fain to avail himself of the benefit of an illfavoured looking mule that stood ready saddled in an outhouse. He doubted not that Peregil would bring his horse after him, and render compensation for the mule, which indeed, from the miserable appearance of the beast, would be no difficult matter.

Accordingly, after making his way to the place appointed, he waited two whole hours in a state of extreme anxiety and suspense, alarmed at every noise lest it should be a pursuit, and only consoling himself with the idea, that when his horse should arrive he could soon place himself out of the reach of danger.

At length he descried his valet advancing at a most leisurely pace, not mounted on his own strong horse, and leading a beautiful Arabian, but bestriding a miserable jackass, which required constant application of the whip. Of this Peregil was by no means sparing, to induce him to move at even the slowest pace a jackass is capable of travelling.

- "Peregil, thou imp of Satan, where is my horse?" impatiently demanded Don Rodrigo.
 - " At the inn," sullenly answered the valet.
- "At the inn, thou rascal! why didst thou not bring it, knowing, as you ought, that my life is in jeopardy?"
- "For a very good reason," replied Perigil, "because they would not let me. You need only blame yourself, Señor, for since your honor scruples not to make free with the

reverend friar's mule, you ought not to be surprised if his reverence takes the same liberty with your horse."

- "By Santiago de Compostela,* this is past bearing," cried Don Rodrigo. "How can the rogue of a friar conscientiously take my beautiful Arabian for this worthless mule? What! has the man of God no conscience?"
- "I did not inquire that, Señor, but I rather think he is not overburthened by the manner he has dealt with me.—Oh! if I could catch his reverence by himself, I would so belabour his shaven skull, as not to leave it in want of razors for the future."
- "Well, but how comest thou by that contemptible jackass?" demanded Don Rodrigo, angrily.
- "Gently, Señor, gently; since the master shows such a predilection for mules, it is not to be wondered if the valet evinces a similar taste for jackasses."
- "Villain! darest thou jest at this time and on such a subject?"
 - * St. James of Compostela, patron of Spain.

"Aye, 'tis no laughing matter, sure enough," quoth Peregil; "and in sooth I cannot perceive why I should be facetious on the occasion, for after all I am the greater loser of the two. Look for a moment at this vile beast! May the lightning of heaven and the curses of all the saints fall on him and his former master too;" and so saying he again belaboured the sides of the unfortunate jackass, regretting that its former master was not near enough to benefit by the energetic blows he so liberally dealt out.

"A truce, fellow, with thy profane foolery," said Don Rodrigo; "it is not seemly when the life of thy master is at stake. Prepare to give me a full and circumstantial account of this iniquitous business, or by my sword thou shalt severely rue the day thy master first bestrode a mule."

"Alack a-day," submissively rejoined the valet.—" You must know, Don Rodrigo, that the mule is the cause of all this. When I returned from church I was startled to see the inn thrown into the greatest confusion.

The reverend fat friar was running round the place bellowing like a bull, calling for his noble mule, and vowing vengeance on the profane thief, which unseemly appellation he was pleased to bestow upon your honor."

"The friar must have been drunk," said Don Rodrigo, sneeringly; "why! did he not perceive that I had left my steed in the stable, which I think was sufficient security, till you could pay him the value of his beggarly mule!"

"Sure enough he did perceive it, but when I proposed to pay him for his loss, he demanded such an exorbitant price that it was out of my power to comply therewith. In his opinion, the steed was no adequate compensation for his mule; so to make matters even, and adjust the affair amicably, he proposed that I should give up my horse into the bargain, and then take this abominable ass as a present."

Peregil accompanied the epithet with another donation of his wonted favors.

"Thou miserable sinner," said Don Ro-

drigo, "how couldst thou consent to this nefarious arrangement?"

"Because I could not help it. Think you, Señor mio, I would have agreed to such an extortion had it been in my power to avoid it? But your precipitate flight gave me to understand that you had killed your adversary. Any delay in the town might have been attended with danger, backed as his reverence was by all the rabble of the inn."

Don Rodrigo was sensible of the force of this argument, and after bestowing sundry anathemas on the cheating friar and the inn, in which he was zealously joined by Peregil, he said in a melancholy tone, "Well, as there is no remedy, we must put up with this misfortune as well as we can."

"So we must, Señor," replied Peregil; .
"and at least there is some consolation in the reflection that we are already on such familiar terms with dame Fortune, that this new instance of her good-will ought by no means to take us by surprise.—But may I ask whither we are going?"

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- "To seek refuge in the mountains," gloomily answered Don Rodrigo.
- "Well, may the help of God be with us!" ejaculated Peregil, "for we stand marvellously in need of it."

Saying this, they bent their course to the Alpujarras, as melancholy and slowly as suited the condition and convenience of the animals that bore them. Indeed, from time to time, the reverend mule actually stood still, as if pondering what he should do, and it required all Don Rodrigo's caresses (for he dared employ no other means) to induce her to proceed.

Thus the distressed master and his humble valet continued their march, for the space of three hours, in a most gloomy night. Observing at length that his servant made a dead stop, Don Rodrigo determined to assist him, and accordingly indicated his intention to the mule; but to his utter dismay he found that she had profited by the good example set by her companion the ass, and stood stone still. This obstinacy of their animals proved more

than equal to the powers of Don Rodrigo and his man, who, after exhausting their strength in fruitless chastisement, prudently resolved to wait the leisure of their more determined companions. They took shelter, therefore, under the spreading branches of a large tree, and there they remained in anxious expectation of day-break, passing the tedious hours in silent and profound reflections on their miserable condition.

CHAPTER VIII.

O gran contrasto in giovenil pensiero, Desir di laude ed impeto d'Amore; Né chi più vaglia ancor si trova il vero, Che resta or questo, or quello superiore.

Ariosto.

At first a vague suspicion, a blind dread, Then a quick feeling of the fatal truth Instinctive flashed across her mind.

Wiffen's Tasso.

THE first rosy tints of morning at length began to appear, and the heavy clouds of night were gradually rolling away before the splendour of the approaching sun, when Don Manuel de Monteblanco, who was already on the alert, received information that a party of horsemen were rapidly approaching the mansion. The old cavalier hastened to a spot whence he could descry his visitors, and form a judgment of their quality. The party consisted of an armed knight, and about

half a dozen men-at-arms, bounding over the elastic turf, with the greatest buoyancy of spirits. Don Manuel, who stood watching their advance, was soon able to recognize, in the martial figure and gallant carriage of the knight, his young friend and kinsman, Don Antonio de Levva, of whose arrival he had been in daily expectation. The youthful warrior was clad in a suit of polished steel armour, inlaid with silver; a quantity of massy and waving red plumage almost overshaded his shining helmet, and threw a crimson flush over his manly countenance, in which an expression of resolute courage was blended with an air of gaiety and frankness. The colour of his cheek was heightened by exercise, and the brilliancy of his dark blue eyes expressed an unusual degree of animation, whilst his blooming age and the gracefulness of his carriage tended to increase the interest of his commanding appearance. He was mounted on a fiery and slender barb, decorated with the most costly trappings, which appeared to participate in

the buoyancy of the rider; for he champed the bit and shook off the white foam, requiring all the dexterity of his master to restrain the impetuosity of his nature.

The small party which accompanied the youthful warrior were arrayed in the military costume of the period. They served Don Antonio as an escort, and belonged to the body of which he was the leader. Upon their arrival the massy doors of the mansion were thrown open, and the venerable Monteblanco stood at the entrance ready to receive his noble visitor. The next moment Don Antonio, springing from his steed, threw himself into the arms that hospitably invited him to their embrace.

"Welcome, Don Antonio, thrice welcome to the abode of your old friend and kinsman."

"Save you, noble Don Manuel; it rejoices me to see that the hand of time has made so little impression upon you; your spirits are still young and ardent. How does the fair Theodora?"

"Blooming as the rose of summer, fair as the lily of the valley, and blith-some as the free tenant of the air," replied the fond father; "but come in," he continued, with joyful accents; "come and refresh yourself. Pedro," he then added, turning to his major-domo, a long, thin, grave looking personage, "mind that these cavaliers," pointing to Don Antonio's attendants, "are well entertained."

Then taking his relative by the hand, he led him into the mansion.

- "Theodora," he then resumed, "is as yet at her morning orisons, in the company of good Martha, but on an occasion like the present, there would be no great sin in shortening her devotions."
- "By no means," replied Don Antonio, smiling; "it is not my maxim to disturb fair ladies when so laudably occupied."
- "Well, my young friend, as you please; but, good heavens!" continued he, surveying his guest from head to foot, with much complacency, "how you are altered! It is a

goodly and consoling sight to see the improvement a few years bestow on a young man. You have distinguished yourself at the games," said Don Manuel; "this is a source of unspeakable joy to me, the more so, as it appears that the queen has been pleased to reward your merit. I have heard that you are entrusted with the command of a party of those gallant men, that are destined to chastise the rebellious Moors of the Alpujarras."

"In truth," modestly answered Don Antonio, "our great queen has condescended to honor me far above my deserts; but I trust that my future conduct will make me worthy of the confidence she has reposed in me."

" I suppose, then," said Don Manuel, " that your stay at Guadix will be but short?"

"Very short; as I am only allowed to wait the arrival of my party, and must then set off immediately to join the army under the command of the noble Aguilar."

"Then, my dear kinsman," observed Monteblanco, smiling, "the object of your visit must be accomplished without further delay."

"I shall never complain of too much expedition when the happiness of my life is so intimately concerned."

At this moment the door of the saloon was thrown open, and Theodora was ceremoniously ushered in by the stately duenna, who, after making a stiff and formal courtsey, sunk back, and kept a respectful distance.

"Dear child," said Don Manuel, "here is your kinsman, Don Antonio de Leyva, with whom you are already acquainted. He appears in our house as best becomes a gallant knight; his brow adorned with the wreath of triumph for the skill and prowess he has displayed in the games, a sure omen of his future glory in the field."

Theodora offered her hand to the salutation of her kinsman, with an attempt at cordiality; but it was evidently an effort to hide the real coldness she felt; for an involuntary tremor crept gradually over her, and her countenance betrayed strong symp-

toms of emotion, as she began to suspect the object of Don Antonio's visit. Indeed, the tone of ease and affection, in which her father and young de Leyva conversed, tended to confirm those suspicions, the truth of which she so much dreaded to learn.

As soon as Don Antonio withdrew, Monteblanco requested to speak with his daughter in his apartment. The trembling girl obeyed with a faltering step, looking like a criminal about to receive the sentence that is to seal her fate. The duenna remained somewhat surprised at this mysterious transaction, in which her family counsel and approbation had been so unceremoniously dispensed with. Her pride was mortified; in high dudgeon, she crossed herself with fervour; and then departed, muttering something between a prayer and a malediction.

A short time after, the conference broke up, and Theodora came forth, her eyes swimming in tears, and evincing the most lively emotion. She hied to her own chamber, and fastening the door, she gave a free vent to her grief.

"Alas!" she exclaimed, "the dreadful suspicion is confirmed, and the resolute manner in which my father has enforced his commands, affords me no room to hope for any alteration—any delay. Not a month—not even a week is allowed me to prepare—the measure of my misfortune is full—Lost! lost!—Oh! Lope! Lope!——"

She could proceed no further; the tumult of sorrow impeded her utterance, and she gave loose to her feelings in sighs and tears.

Presently, however, a comforter came to proffer advice and assistance—in the shape of the duenna. As we have already seen, she was ruffled by Don Manuel's want of confidence, and proper regard for her judgment; and she had resolved to tender her assistance to another quarter. It is to be observed the duenna was of a most obliging disposition. She bestowed her good advice most liberally, and she had an inexhaustible fund of pious exclamations and admonitions at the service of her friends. She could not forego the idea of being

serviceable, and therefore very properly desired to be consulted on all occasions. Yet with all these amiable qualities, the duenna, in the opinion of most people, would be entitled to no better appellation for her pains than that of a busy body.

"Niña,* how's this?" she cried—"What mean these tears?—Aye! aye! I see that your father has been guilty of some preposterous and tyrannical measure; I suspected as much from his carefulness in keeping the secret from me.—God bless the man!—what is the matter with him?—he will never be advised, and really I cannot imagine why I remain in his house. Well, child, unfold your sorrows and grievances to your kindest friend; you know nothing delights me so much as consoling the afflicted, and offering service to the unprotected."

"Yes, good Martha," replied the sorrowing girl; "I am fully sensible of your goodness, and I do trust you will not deny me your compassion. Alas! without your valuable

advice and assistance, I shall never surmount the difficulties with which I am surrounded. I must see him—I must see Don Lope this very night!"

She then explained to Martha the nature of her distress, and the duenna, glad to find an opportunity of being serviceable, readily promised her co-operation in the accomplishment of her charge's wishes.

CHAPTER IX:

Ye fair!

Be greatly cautious of your sliding hearts!

Dare not the infectious sigh; nor in the bower

Where woodbines flaunt, and roses shed a couch,

While evening draws her crimson curtain round,

Trust your soft minutes with betraying man.

Thomson.

In the most retired part of Monteblanco's garden, reclining on a rustic seat, under the fragrant canopy of the myrtle and arbutus, sat a female form enveloped in a loosely flowing dress of virgin whiteness. The air was cool and serene, and except the rustling of the surrounding foliage, when agitated by the breeze, or the soft plaintive voice of the nightingale, no obtrusive sound disturbed the solemn silence. The blue vault of heaven, glittering with countless stars, the rich

perfume flung around by the orange flower and jasmine, and a stilly languor that pervaded the spot, all disposed the mind to gentle and loving thoughts.

Theodora, however, sat absorbed in silent sorrow and abstraction: her long clustering tresses fell in luxuriance over her white and polished neck, almost concealing in their profusion the traits of a countenance overcast with grief and despondency.

But a figure appears on the garden wall, and the sound as of some one falling is heard on the soft turf. Theodora starts, yet a sudden recollection seems to check her momentary fear. The nocturnal visitor was Gomez Arias, who had received a hasty summons from Theodora, and surmising that some unpleasant intelligence awaited him, he hurried in breathless expectation to the place of appointment.

What was his amazement, upon his arrival!

—He beheld his Theodora, not in the joyful eagerness of affection springing forward to meet his embrace, but silent and dejected.

Her intelligent countenance no longer beamed with that charming smile which his appearance never failed to create. Motionless and unmoved she appeared, amongst the flowery shrubs and verdant foliage of the garden, like some statue of chaste and classical beauty, placed to embellish and diversify the sylvan spot.

Gomez Arias is before her, and yet she seems hardly conscious of his presence. He gazes on her with surprise, and then gently whispers her dear name. The well known voice recalls her scattered ideas, and its magic sound awakens her benumbed sensations to fresh warmth and life. She raised her head, threw aside the rich clusters of her hair, and a stream of moonlight falling on her countenance revealed to Gomez Arias a picture of sorrowing love.

Her eye was swollen with grief, and the big tears in quick succession chased each other down her pallid cheek.

Don Lope approached her tenderly, and folding her in his arms, endeavoured to calm

her emotion, by the most soothing and endearing expressions.

"Theodora, what means this sorrow? Whatever be the misfortune which threatens us, do not vainly yield yourself a prey to terror, before you know the means I may have of averting it." Then, as if struck by a passing thought, he added—"You surely cannot entertain a distant doubt of the singleness—the devotedness of my affection?"

"Doubt of your affection! Oh, heavens! do not even mention the appalling word; there is something more terrible than death in the very idea. No, no," she continued, with vivid earnestness; "I do not; I cannot; I will not doubt of your affection. If ever such agonizing——"

She could not proceed, for her imagination was so powerfully acted upon, even with the remote image of such a misfortune, that she was obliged to remain some time silent before she could control her emotions.

"No," she resumed; "I cannot doubt

your affection. But there is another calamity in store for me that will assuredly render wretched the rest of my existence.

She again stopped, and her tears flowed more abundantly than ever.

Gomez Arias felt relieved from a heavy fore-boding; for the idea that his engagement with Leonor de Aguilar had come to the know-ledge of Theodora, had at first filled his mind with apprehensions. He was accordingly more at ease, feeling an inward conviction that however distressing the dreaded intelligence might prove, he should still find resources within himself to avert its dangers.

- "Speak, my Theodora; unfold the cause of your extraordinary sorrow, and do not weep and tremble thus."
- "Oh, Lope!" she despondingly cried, "I must renounce you for ever."
- "For heaven's sake, calm this agitation, Theodora, and let me know the worst. But yesterday you were as happy as a heart teeming with genuine affection, and blessed with

a most unbounded return, can make a mortal, and now ——"

"He is come," she fearfully interrupted bim; "my destined husband is come."

Gomez Arias appeared staggered at this unexpected information, but immediately recovering himself in apparent calmness, demanded the name of his rival. "Who is it," he cried, "that boldly claims the hand of my Theodora?—No doubt some noble and distinguished cavalier."

"Alas! your supposition is but too just," replied the weeping girl; "and it is that circumstance which adds to the poignancy of my grief: were he a less estimable character, were he divested of those amiable qualities that render man dear to the eyes of woman, my reasons for refusing his addresses would be unanswerable. In that case, if I were made a victim to parental authority, some consolation might be found in the conviction that the inextinguishable hatred which I bore him was grounded on justice. But the man that seeks an alliance with our house is one

whose choice would confer the greatest honor on the most exalted of the land. Brave, generous, of noble birth, and alike distinguished for the superiority of his mind and person, he is in the highest favor with the queen, who has intrusted him with the command of one of the divisions which are now marching against the rebel Moors."

Theodora made these observations in the perfect simplicity of her heart, but she unconsciously excited an idea of the most galling nature in the mind of her lover. Not that he felt the pangs of jealousy, for he was too confident both in his own merit, and the unparalleled affection of his beloved; but yet he was inwardly mortified at the encomiums bestowed on another, inasmuch as they gave rise to a comparison which he could not easily brook. He, therefore, with some asperity of tone, inquired the name of this accomplished knight; and Theodora, who perceived the inward workings of his soul, with a faultering voice pronounced the name of Don Antonio The sound operated like an de Leyva.

electric shock on the mind of Gomez Arias, and despite of his habitual self-command, signs of uncommon perturbation were discernible in his countenance.

"What!" he cried, "Don Antonio de Leyva,—that presumptuous, that detested youth!"

Here he checked his emotion; pride resumed the mastery over his irritated feelings, and with a forced gaiety of manner, he continued,—

"Certainly Don Antonio is a gallant cavalier, and well calculated to captivate a woman's affections."

He stopped; for his surprise had been too abrupt, and his manner too ill disguised to continue long in this constrained suppression of his real feelings. Gomez Arias hated Don Antonio on no other plea, than the fame he was daily acquiring for his valour and brilliant qualities. Besides, he could not forget his adventure in the tournament, when Non Antonio crossed him in his career, and well nigh endangered the reputation he had

that day acquired. He looked on him, therefore, as a dangerous rival, and felt chagrined at the command with which the queen had invested him, as it would afford him opportunities of grounding his claims to her royal favor on the firmest foundation.

Theodora was far from suspecting the cause of her lover's agitation. She naturally attributed to a feeling of jealousy, what was in fact the effect of restless emulation. A long pause ensued, during which the state of Theodora became more distressing, as she perceived her lover's countenance gradually assuming an unusual expression of sternness. Various passions seemed to be contending for mastery in his bosom, but the feeling of wounded pride soon appeared to predominate. His eyes glistened with indignant fire, his lip curled with a bitter smile, and the flush of anger mantled on his brow.

"Theodora!" he said, fixing earnestly his eyes on the trembling girl; "Theodora, you have deceived me!"

"Deceive you, Gomez Arias!" She looked

petrified at the bare supposition. "Deceived you! And can you for a moment harbour such a cruel, such a degrading suspicion? Oh! Lope, is it possible you can think thus basely of your Theodora?"

"Why was not I made acquainted with this engagement before?"

"I was ignorant of it myself; the marriage had been settled between my father and Don Antonio, without consulting my inclination. Alas! the first intelligence I received, was to bid me prepare for the ceremony, which is to take place immediately.—My dearest Lope," she added with tenderness; "Oh! never again harrow up my feelings, with doubts unworthy of our mutual passion."

She clung to Don Lope's neck, and pressing him with the earnestness of unbounded confidence and love—"Never," she continued, "had Theodora a single thought concealed from you; you, the absolute master of my heart, and the most secret wishes of my soul."

Then in a more composed manner, she proceeded: "It was but this morning that Don

Antonio arrived, when my father immediately proceeded to announce the purport of his My amazement at first visit. bounds; I remonstrated on the abruptness of the proposal, and endeavoured, by gentle expostulation, to ward off the threatening blow. But my entreaties, and my tears were in vain. My father, strenuously bent on the accomplishment of his wishes, left me the only option of yielding implicit obedience to his mandates, or passing the rest of my existence in the solitary gloom of a convent. My choice is made; I lose you, Lope;"-and here her anguish almost overpowered her utterance; "I lose you for ever, but your dear image shall be constantly before me in those dark abodes of penitence and woe. Thither must I go, and leave all these dear scenes, and the dearer sight of you, consigned to unrelenting misery. Not humbly, alas! to pray; not to abjure the world; for ah! I cannot abjure that world which contains the fondest object that links me to life. I go not in the humble mood of a repentant sinner, to weep over a

repentant sinner, to weep over a guilty life, but in the desponding resolution of a fond woman, eager to keep her faith unbroken to him of her heart's first and only attachment. For you, oh Lope, my tears will flow: you alone will be the theme of my constant meditations-my fervent prayers. In my hopeless solitude, I may perhaps feel one glimpse of consolation;—the idea that you may be happy, and that even in the glittering scenes of ambition, you will sometimes revert to the cheerless abode of Theodora. This will afford me some solace in my affliction. And when the hand of death releases me from my odious chains, your tears will tenderly fall on the grave of her, whose greatest crime was that of loving you too well."

"Theodora!" exclaimed Gomez Arias, moved by the picture she had drawn; "and is this then the only remedy you can devise?"

"What!" cried she eagerly, "is there any other to be found?"

She paused, and gazed on Gomez Arias,.

with anxious expectation, breathless with hope.

Don Lope, after a momentary lapse, with a chilling coldness, observed—" You do not love me, Theodora!"

"Oh Heavens!" she cried in the hurried accents of terror—"Never, Lope, never utter those killing words;—what do you require of me?—Speak, Gomez Arias, speak: I will do all, to convince you of the sincerity of my affection, and the cruel injustice of your words."

"You must fly then from the abode of parental oppression," calmly replied Don Lope; "and in your lover you shall find that tenderness, which a father denies; nay, start not, these words may perhaps alarm you, yet consider it is our only resource, and that imperious necessity is a law to which we must all submit. In a short time you shall be mine in the face of heaven, and now, you must resolve to follow me."

Theodora started at the proposition. She fixed her eyes on Gomez Arias, and with a

deep but tranquil anguish exclaimed—" Alas, Don Lope! Is this the remedy you propose? Can you indeed tempt me to abandon my father in his declining years, to regret and shame!"

"You had already determined to abandon him," observed Gomez Arias.

"No, Lope," she replied; "by that step, I should only disappoint him in his expectations—not incur his merited hatred and malediction;—his grief would be tempered by resignation, not corroded with the sting of shame. Don Lope," she then continued with dignity, "command my life; but oh! never, never require of me the commission of a crime, as the proof of my love."

"Stay, Theodora," interrupted Gomez Arias, with a composure that ill agreed with the terrific cloud gathering on his brow; "stay, you are right, and I must retract my words: the offer was dictated in the transports of sincere and ardent love, and as the only means left us in the hour of danger. But I perceive that I have mistaken your sentiments;

such actions were only made for souls capable of feeling and appreciating the extent of a true passion; not for cold and timorous beings like yourself. I flattered my fond pride, that in you I had met with a miracle of deep and all-absorbing affection, but I am deceived, and sorely shall I repent my delusion; I now see you in your true colours; you are like the rest of your feeble sex, pleased with the gratification of their vanity, but incapable of a bold and generous resolution in favor of the man they pretend to love. I will not upbraid you; but from this moment cast you from me as a piece of inanimate clay, a painted thing, alike incapable of estimating and sharing my regard."

Saying this he rudely disengaged himself from her arms, whilst the unfortunate Theodora, affrighted at the violence of his manner, fixed on him a wild and vacant stare, the intensity of her grief depriving her of the power of reflection. But when she saw her lover actually receding from the place, her mind started from its abstraction, and her

thoughts were fixed upon the dreadful desertion that now threatened her. She gave a frantic shriek, and fell lifeless on the ground.

Alarmed at the effect produced by his passionate and cruel proceeding, Gomez Arias hurried back to the spot, and raising the lovely victim from the ground, gazed on her with all the anxiety of returning affection. Theodora was in his arms, but, alas! her beautiful eves were closed, her cheek was colourless, and a cold suffusion bathed her stiffened limbs. The vital spark had apparently deserted its frail tenement, for no sign of conscious life was there. Don Lope's angry feelings had given way to his fears for her safety, and as he wiped the cold dew from her face, he perceived blood trickling slowly down her marble brow. In the violence of her fall upon the gravelled walk, a flint had wounded her forehead, and the crimson drops that issued from it contrasted mournfully with the frozen paleness of her countenance.

Gomez Arias was moved as he gazed intensely on the angelic creature now before him. This was no artful fiction, no solemn mockery of woe: a few words had worked that dreadful revolution in her mind. Perhaps there is at times an indescribable cruelty in love that prompts a man, in a certain degree, to enjoy the misery which is wrought by an excess of affection towards him, and triumph now mingled with compassion in the abandoned lover's heart. He was, however. soon called to more generous sentiments. Anxiety and regret took place of vanity, while his passion for Theodora acquired new intensity as he scanned her beauteous figure and contemplated the distress he had occasioned. With the most endearing efforts he endeavoured to reanimate the lifeless form of Theodora. . He ardently pressed the yielding burthen to his heart, placed his glowing cheek by the cold one of his mistress, fervently kissed the crimson stain upon her forehead, and then bound it with a scarf.

Theodora, however, for some time gave

no sign of life. Don Lope called her by the most tender names, sprinkled her face with the water of a neighbouring fountain, and exhausted himself in efforts to revive her. At last she gently opened her eyes, a scarce perceptible motion shook her frame, and shortly after she raised her white fingers to her forehead, as if conscious of sensation, She heaved a deep sigh, and Gomez Arias watching with anxious gaze the progress of her reviving senses, strove with soothing fondness to hasten their return. Her eyes gently opened, and a sad smile played upon her lip, as she acknowledged the tender solicitude of her lover, unable as yet to express herself by words.

"Theodora, my dearest, don't you know me?"

Her abstracted senses awoke as if from a horrid dream, and with fearful and convulsive clasp she hung to Don Lope's neck.

"He is not gone—no, no, I have him here—"The rest of her sentence was lost in a hysteric laugh.

"No, my love," tenderly said Gomez Arias,
"I am not gone, nor ever will. I am a barbarian to treat you thus. I do not merit such
excellence as thine, and I crave thy forgiveness for the misery I have inflicted."

Theodora, now perfectly restored, saw the stain of blood on her lover's lip, then she felt the bandage on her forehead, and when Gomez Arias explained the nature of her wound, the fond girl rejoiced at a cause that had called forth her lover's anxiety and caresses.

They remained in profound silence, which they were both afraid to break, for they trembled to renew a subject which had produced such melancholy effects.

But time was swiftly flying, and Gomez Arias again urged the necessity of adopting some resolution.

"Theodora," he said, "the night is wearing fast away, her friendly shade will but for a short time longer favor us, and the morning must, alas! throw still darker shadows over our brightest hopes." Theodora sighed deeply, but was unable to reply.

"What is to be done?" demanded Don Lope. "Is it your wish that we should part for ever?"

"Part for ever!" cried Theodora; "Oh Heavens! the idea is more than I can endure."

"There is no other alternative left us," said Gomez Arias, "unless you feel yourself courageous enough to—" and here he cast an inquiring glance, and waited her reply; for though the purport of his meaning was obvious, he felt almost afraid to convey it by language.

Theodora's distress increased, and her fond arms that had till now encircled her lover's neck, loosened their hold, whilst her head drooped despondingly upon her bosom.

After a short pause—" My love," continued Gomez Arias, "you must decide, and instantly, we have but a short time more to remain."

"Don Lope," exclaimed the afflicted girl,

with impassioned eagerness, "pity! oh pity my horible situation, and do not tempt me with a crime, to which my own fond woman's heart urges me but too strongly. No, do not exert that uncontroulable power which you possess over my very soul, to sink me deeper into the abyss of misery, that must embitter my future existence. Do not force me to destroy the tranquillity and comfort of a venerable parent—of that parent, whose greatest fault is his excessive fondness and solicitude for his child. Though by his last determination he has completed my misery, he is nevertheless more deserving of pity than reproach. Alas! while he destroys my felicity and repose, he cherishes the idea, that he is laying the foundation of the future happiness of his child."

"Yes!" cried Gomez Arias, smiling bitterly, "by forcing her to waste her life in a cloister."

"No," exclaimed Theodora, "he does not suppose me capable of such a terrible resolution; he is ignorant that my affections are irretrievably bestowed on another, fondly imagining that I shall not long be insensible to the merits of the husband he has chosen."

She fell on the ground, and clasping the knees of her lover, proceeded with redoubled emotion—"Oh, Lope, I know but too well my own weakness! Take, therefore, compassion on my distress, urge me no further, and do not avail yourself of the tenderness and self-devotion of one who adores you, to render her a cruel and delinquent daughter."

Gomez Arias was powerfully struck with the earnestness of her manner; he never imagined he should meet with such opposition from a heart so enthusiastically devoted. He could not but admire the generosity and nobleness of feeling which thus voluntarily condemned itself to a life of solitude and despair, rather than deviate in the smallest degree from moral rectitude. Yet he was inwardly mortified at her superiority, and would fain have persuaded himself that her scruples proceeded rather from a deficiency

of passion than from a sense of honor and filial duty. He looked on her with a mixture of compassion and disappointment as he endeavoured to raise her from the ground.

"No, never," she cried, "never will I rise till you grant my request."

. "Rise, rise, Theodora," said he gloomily, "and listen to me for the last time.—Since it is your desire, I will no longer press a sacrifice I was naturally bound to expect from your repeated, and apparently sincere, protestations of regard. Since you will have it so, I must yield. I will begone immediately; but if you are to be for ever lost to me, think not I will tamely submit to my wrongs. I will seek out the cause of our misfortunes, and if he is the valiant knight report speaks him, I shall then find the only solace left me in my desolation, that of taking ample vengeance or falling nobly by his weapon. And now," he added after a short pause, "farewell Theodora! Farewell, for we part for ever!"

"No, you cannot," franticly cried The-

odora, "you must not leave me thus. Oh Lope! you were always tender, and generous, and kind.—Never did you in the slightest manner wound my heart till this dreadful night."

"True," replied Don Lope, "and never till the present moment could I doubt your love."

"Oh Lope! Lope! and is it to your Theodora you speak thus! In pity recall those dreadful words."

"Silly girl," vehemently exclaimed Gomez Arias, "what do you require of me? Or what is it that you wish? You have chosen your path, let me now take mine, unless you force me in my anguish to curse the hour when I first beheld you."

"Curse the day you saw me!" As she uttered this exclamation an involuntary chill crept over her, which seemed to have frozen the springs of her heart.

"Theodora," he now said in a tone of sad reproach, "dry your tears—you will soon have bitter occasion for them. May you enjoy that repose which you have for ever destroyed in my heart—Farewell! Farewell!"

As he said this he gently strove to disengage himself from her hold. The struggle was too powerful for her nature, and like the poor bird when under the magic influence of the serpent, yields itself to the destructive charm, Theodora, unable any longer to combat with her overpowering feelings, threw herself into her lover's arms, and exclaimed passionately upon his bosom—"No, no, dear Lope, we will not part. Let it be as you will." She paused, and then added with solemnity—" It is decreed that I must be wretched, but you at least shall never have reason to reproach me."

Gomez Arias clasped her fondly to his breast, and in the transports of his joy, endeavoured to draw a glowing picture of their future happiness.

"My dearest Theodora, hush your apprehensions and unreasonable fears. At the first opportunity we marry. Your father will at last relent, and even if he should prove deaf to the appeal of nature, the love and gratitude of Gomez Arias will supply the loss."

"Oh that is my only consolation," she interrupted with eagerness. "Love me, Lope, love me even as I love you. No, no, that is not possible. But, oh, if thy love should ever decrease—deceive me! in pity deceive me! Do not let me suspect the dreadful truth—No, let death first conceal from me so terrible a secret."

Gomez Arias again tenderly essayed to calm her agitation, and then urged the necessity of quitting the place with the utmost expedition. She made no longer any resistance, for she had advanced too far now to recede, and leaning on her lover she was almost carried along the garden.

Gomez Arias quickly made a signal, and a ladder of ropes was thrown from the other side. At the sight Theodora could scarcely restrain the agony of her feelings. A crowd of thoughts distracted her mind—a load of anguish was upon her breast, and had it not been for the support of her lover, she would

have fallen. Gomez Arias bore the trembling girl across the wall, but as she stood for an instant on the summit, she cast a long melancholy look on the home of her innocence and childhood—the now deserted abode of a venerable parent, and with a heart throbbing with anguish, she intrusted herself to the protection of her lover.

CHAPTER X.

Where is she?

1

I wish to see my daughter, shew her me;

You have betrayed me; y' have let loose The jewel of my life: Go, bring her me, And set her here before me.—

Beaumont and Fletcher.

THE next day arrived—a day of sorrow for the unfortunate Monteblanco. Seated on a ponderous chair of rude workmanship, the old caballero waited for the appearance of his darling daughter, to pay her morning devoirs, and receive his blessing. He waited patiently for some time, but his mind becoming fraught with more than usual anxiety, he called lustily to the duenna,—he called again, and again, but to no purpose. The pious old dame was deeply engaged in her orisons,

and her mind occupied with other affairs than appertain to this sinful world. She appeared at last, her eyes half closed, her lips moving fast in the fervour of her devotions, and her long skinny fingers employed in a manner equally devout, as with the most exemplary industry, and solemn sedateness, she let fall in measured intervals, one by one, the large black counters of her rosary.

- "The Lord be with you!" ejaculated piously the duenna.
- "Save you, good Martha," responded Don Manuel.
- "And may the blessed Virgin forgive you Señor, for thus disturbing an humble sinner at her prayers."
- "Amen!" answered Don Manuel; " and now Martha tell me where is my daughter."
- " Ave Maria!" continued the duenna, as another counter fell.

Monteblanco, who expected quite a different answer, was however kind enough to give the customary response to the salutation.

- "Santa Maria!" muttered he with a movement of impatience, raising nevertheless his eyes to heaven. But it so happened that the devotion of the old cavalier was obliged to give way to his paternal solicitude.
- "Martha," he therefore cried, " put aside your beads, and tell me, in goodness tell me, if my child is indisposed."
- " Holy Virgin!" exclaimed the duenna, what brings that into your head, Don Manuel?"
- "If not," demanded the father, "how does it happen she has not yet appeard?—Where is she?"
- "In bed, God help her," replied Martha, "for she very naturally concluded, that a lady who had spent the night in an amorous colloquy, could not be expected to rise over early the next morning."
- "In bed!" echoed Monteblanco, "in bed! shame, why it is past seven," he added, somewhat ruffled at the idea. "What! has she passed an indifferent night?"
 - "Not that I know of, unless indeed that she

may have been a little too zealous in her midnight devotions: the grace of the Lord be upon her for a sweet, innocent child. Bless her soul, she could not be otherwise after the holy counsel which I, a miserable sinner, have endeavoured to instil into her tender mind."

- "Martha, Martha," seriously observed Don Manuel, "I do not entirely approve of this excess of devotion."
- " Ah!" ejaculated the duenna. " That is exactly what I say to her, but she is very scrupulous in her religious exercises."
- "Well Martha, you must moderate her zeal, and make her understand that the views of heaven will be much better realized, by yielding implicit obedience to the dictates of a father; and now," he added in a more familiar tone, "go, and bid her come, for I expect Don Antonio de Leyva every minute."

The duenna went out muttering a Gloria Patri, which was exactly finished by the time she got at the other side of the door. She then hastened to the chamber of her charge,

by no means pleased with a somnolency that exposed her to any rebuke, however trifling.

"Oh you sluggish girl," she began. "Dios me perdone,* what means this? Are you not ashamed to be in bed at this time in the morning, and allow a christian matron like me to be disturbed at her prayers on your account? This comes of your nocturnal meetings; I must put a stop to them; they may be very refreshing to the heart, but cannot contribute to the health, nor to the good keeping of the soul; up, up perezosa,+ and never more expose a kind duenna to your father's rebukes; up, immediately, Don Manuel is waiting." Receiving no answer, she took it for granted, being not a little deaf, that Theodora was replying with the various excuses which were naturally to be expected, under similar circumstances. She continued, therefore, without troubling herself as to their import. "Nay, nay, attempt not to exculpate yourself, for it is very wrong to expose me thus, because I am so amiably inclined as to overlook your

^{*} God forgive me.

⁺ Sluggard.

frailties with christian charity. Holy Virgin! I shudder when I think to what perilous compromises my unsullied reputation is daily exposed by the tenderness of my disposition. What is it you say ?-Eh?-What?-you are silent then, well child, after all that is the wisest thing you can do; it pleaseth me to see you thus humble, for humility, like charity, covereth a multitude of sins." The good duenna proceeded in this strain for some time, without receiving any check to her eloquence, till at length, surprised at such an excess of contrition, she grew impatient, flung the windows wide open, pulled the bed hangings aside, when to her utter consternation she found the object of her intended visitation vanished. The surprise of the duenna was strongly pictured on her shrivelled visage, as the dismal truth obtruded itself upon her mind. The wrath of Monteblanco, and the blot upon her own dear reputation, as the natural consequences of this disaster, took possession of her mind. She first uttered something between a whine and a discordant cry, meaning thereby to indicate at once her

emotions of anger and sorrow. Then she began busily to invoke the protection of all the saints in the calendar. But the saints, though very holy personages in their way, are by no means the proper persons to consult respecting the discovery of stray damsels. She appeared to place more confidence in her own exertions than in their assistance. She commenced a scrupulous search in every part of the chamber, under and round about the bed, and waddling out of the apartment, she left no corner in the house unsearched.

Astonished at the duenna's activity, and puzzled to discover the cause, the servants flocked around her, but to all their inquiries she gave no other answer but interjections and exclamations, and such harsh guttural sounds, that they began to suspect that the good dame had fairly lost her wits.

The garden was now explored, but alas! with no better success, and the perturbation of poor Martha's mind baffled all description.

It was some time before she could deter-

mine what course to pursue, balancing in her mind whether it would be more prudent to avoid the impending storm by flight, or boldly and confidently to encounter her master's ire. Flight certainly is the method preferred on similar occasions; but then by adopting it she would tacitly confess herself guilty, and her. tender reputation would be sullied with an indelible stain; by bravely encountering, on the other hand, the irritated father, she could stoutly deny all cognizance of the affair, and boldly call on all the saints of Heaven to assert her innocence, witnesses to whose testimony Martha always confidently appealed, being satisfied they would have no inclination to contradict her.

Acting upon this idea, she left the garden, instilling into her parchment features all the surprise and grief that she could muster up at so short a notice.

In the meantime Monteblanco, heartily tired of sending message after message, resolved to seek himself the cause of the duenna's protracted absence,

- "Martha—Martha," he cried, as soon as he saw her—" In the name of the devil, what means this?"
- "Hush, Don Manuel!" replied the duenna, with great solemnity of manner—" Hush, venerated Señor; for sure enough the evil one has been at work."
- "What!" exclaimed the astonished Don Manuel, "explain yourself, and quickly."
- "Holy Virgin!" proceeded the dame, "that such a thing should happen in my time!"
- "In the name of God—Martha," cried again the father, in agony, "tell me what misfortune has happened."
- "Oh!" whined the duenna, struggling hard to force from her old eyes a couple of rebellious tears, "ask me not, for shame and sorrow will choke my utterance."
- "May all the curses of Heaven choke you! Woman, what have you done with my daughter? Speak—speak, or by Santiago de Compostela, I will so belabour thy shrivelled

form, as to reduce it to atoms in less time than you can say your credo."

The duenna had never before seen her master in so terrible a passion, and she almost repented not having followed her first impulse to fly. She inwardly cursed that tenderness for her reputation, which had brought the more substantial part of her person into the present quandary. A vigorous defence was the only alternative now left her.

- "What have I done with your daughter!" she exclaimed, with a look which she meant to be expressive of indignant surprise.—"May the Lord help you!—what should I have done with your daughter?"
 - " Where is she then ?"

A pause ensued.

- "Where is she?" demanded again the agitated father, with redoubled emotion.
- "Alas! I know not—she is gone to all appearance—May the light of Heaven, and her guardian angel conduct her steps!"
- "Gone!—my Theodora gone!" cried Don Manuel in the height of affliction.

"I conclude that to be the case," added the duenna, with assurance, "for she is nowhere to be found."

The desolate father appeared thunderstruck at this intelligence. He smote his venerable forehead, and plucked his grey beard in the anguish of despair. Then he vented the most bitter reproaches against the ingratitude of his daughter, and cursed the day that gave her birth.

Whilst he was thus vainly indulging in the paroxysm of grief, the duenna kept crossing herself with such active fervour, that the repeated and rapid motion of her hand at last caught the attention of the sorrowing and abstracted father.

"Oh, thou vile hypocrite!" he exclaimed, darting a furious look—"Thou beldame!—Is this the way thou hast answered the confidence reposed in thee?—I have nurtured a serpent in my house—I have set the ravenous wolf to guard the lamb! Accursed beldame! Thou art an accomplice in my daughter's flight."

"Holy Virgin of the Conception!" ejaculated the offended Martha, "that such foul aspersions should be thrown on my character, after sixty years of rigid penitence! May the Lord forgive you, Señor, as I do"—and she crossed herself with redoubled zeal.

- "Forgive me, thou imp of the devil!" thundered Don Manuel, astonished at her assurance.—"Forgive me!"
- "I an imp of the devil!—I, who had an aunt who died in odour of sanctity, in the convent of Santa Clara—I, who am second cousin to Fray Domingo, one of the most religious as well as most celebrated preachers of the day!"
- "May the curse of Heaven fall on thee, and him, and all thy race."
- "Do not swear," interrupted Martha; "Oh! do not swear—you fright me—I shall faint."
- "Avaunt, thou detested hag!" continued Don Manuel.
- " San Pedro y san Pablo!" cried the duenna.
- "Thou poisonous crocodile!" replied Don Manuel.
- " San Jose bendito!" responded the duenna.

"Abominable fiend!" returned Don Manuel.

" Animas benditas!" answered the duenna.

This extraordinary litany, however, was at length cut short by the arrival of Don Antonio de Leyva. He was not a little surprised at the scene which presented itself, and was for some time unable to obtain an explanation. When he at length arrived at a knowledge of the affair, his astonishment and sorrow were exhibited in the most lively manner.

- "Alas!" he cried, "I could not but suspect from my first interview with Theodora, that her affections were fixed on another object."
- "Oh, no, no," eagerly replied Don Manuel
 —"you are far from the mark—she cannot
 love any one—how could she form an attach—
 ment without my knowledge?"
- "Then," said Don Antonio, sighing, "it was to avoid my addresses that she has sought a refuge in flight."
- " Jesus Maria!" interposed the duenna—
 " Do not say so, Don Antonio—how could she

possibly object to so accomplished a cava-

"Good dame," answered he, "it is not difficult to account for her dislike; and I must acknowledge with painful sensations, that I am chiefly to blame for this unfortunate occurrence."

"No, no," cried Monteblanco, pointing to Martha; "the person chiefly to blame in this affair, is that detestable hag.—See how she crosses herself, and rolls her eyes to impose upon our credulity; but it is all over—I have been too long the dupe of her affected piety, and seeming austerity of manners; my eyes are at length open to conviction, and I see the despicable creature in her true colours."

"What reason," observed de Leyva, " can you assign for Theodora's strange resolution, unless it be dislike to me, or love for another."

"Alas! I know not what to think," answered Don Manuel; "my mind is bewildered, and all my conjectures may prove wrong. Perhaps some hastiness in my way of proceeding

may have influenced her determination. But I do not despair; she may yet be brought to a sense of her duty: if not," he added despondingly, "the happiness of my declining age is blasted, and heartily shall I wish to be numbered with the dead."

Monteblanco by these means sought a medium between accusing his daughter of downright criminality, and confessing to young de Leyva that his suspicions concerning Theodora's aversion to the intended wedding were not entirely groundless.

He was unwilling also to relinquish the thought of having so excellent a son-in-law, and he believed Don Antonio to be possessed of all those qualities which are capable of enslaving the affections of women, even the most fastidious. He, therefore, prudently resolved, in case of his child's return, to allow her due time to consider the proposal, which he had been so anxious to carry by parental authority, hoping that she would at last be brought to acquiesce in his wishes, by the constant assiduity and numberless accomplishments of her suitor.

Under this impression, he readily accepted the services proffered by Don Antonio, for the recovery of Theodora, and for speedily concerting the means.

"Don Manuel," exclaimed the gallant de Leyva, "spite of your kind and courteous asseverations, I cannot but consider myself the cause of your daughter's leaving her home. This reflection and that tender sentiment which Theodora was as capable of inspiring as I am susceptible of feeling, makes me perhaps a principal in this melancholy event. It is with heartfelt sincerity, therefore, that I offer my assistance. Let us first endeavour to restore the lovely fugitive to her deserted home, and then let not the shadow of compulsion actuate her future determination."

"I shall be happy," replied Don Manuel, "to profit by advice dictated at once by affection and prudence. Theodora," he added after a short pause, "cannot have departed from this city, and we shall probably find her either in a convent, or at the abode of one of her relatives. However, to insure

all precaution, I shall forthwith send despatches to Granada, and the neighbouring towns.

Saying this, Monteblanco made a movement to retire with his young friend, and casting a look of anger on the duenna, he said as he passed—" Thou mayest well tremble, miserable sinner that thou art!"

"Tremble, forsooth!" returned the stately dame, with great dignity of manner. "Innocence has no occasion to tremble; and now it only remains for me to quit a place where my virtue and honesty have so unwarrantably been called in question."

"When thou dost quit my house," said Don Manuel, "it will be to be shut up for life in a convent, there to do penance for thy sins, and to profit by the holy example of that good aunt that died in odour of sanctity."

Left to herself, Martha began seriously to reflect on the unpleasantness of her situation; the threat of a conventual seclusion sounded harshly to her ear. She fancied it would be more advantageous to society that her good offices should continue in requisi-

tion, than that they should be for ever lost by an untimely adoption of a contemplative life.

- "Oh, that ungracious Gomez Arias!" she exclaimed, in her perplexity.
- "What wouldst thou with Gomez Arias?" said a well known voice.

She turned, and saw before her the object of her exclamation.

- "Blessed be the Virgin! It is he, sure enough. What brings you here, Sir? Where is my young lady?"
- "Where is she?" inquired Gomez Arias, with feigned anxiety.
- "Nay, nay, your arts are thrown away on me; I know that Theodora, poor silly thing, has eloped with you. She loves you, in very truth, she does; and when a woman really loves, it is unaccountable what a number of fooleries she will be tempted to commit."
- "Well," returned Don Lope, " supposing she has intrusted herself to my protection, she only followed the dictates of pure affection; surely there could be no harm in so doing."

- "Under favour, Don Lope," observed the duenna, "but there is. Not forsooth in loving you; but yet, there is a crying injustice, an unpardonable cruelty, in leaving me to "suffer for it without a——"
- "Reward, wouldst thou say?" interrupted Don Lope.
- "Valgame San Juan! But you misapprehend me strangely. I am not mercenary; heaven knows my only concern is for my safety, threatened as I am."
- "Threatened! in what possible manner?" demanded Gomez Arias.
 - " With nothing less than a convent."
- "A convent," repeated Don Lope, smiling, "to so devout a dame, methinks, can have no terrors."
- "Aye in troth, I am devout," replied the duenna, "and yet I feel nowise inclined to be immured between four walls. What merit would there be in the sacrifice of an old, poor, decrepid piece of mortality such as L. No, it is the voluntary seclusion of young, rich and beautiful virgins that delights the divinity."

"Most prudent Martha," gaily replied Gomez Arias, "I greatly admire and applaud your discretion. Never ought so worthy, so valuable a matron to be lost to the world. No, thou wert born to be the consolation of gallant knights and amorous damsels; it would be really unpardonable to permit thy seclusion, whilst thou mayest yet tend thy services to lovers. No, no, God forbid thou shouldst go to a nunnery."

"The Lord bless you, good Señor," returned Martha with humility; "but you overrate my poor deserts."

"By my sword! that modesty becomes thee mightily. But we must lose no time. Attend vespers this afternoon, there thou shalt find my conscientious valet, who will give thee proper directions and assistance to effect thy escape, and ample means to pass the remainder of thy precious life in some distant city of Spain, free from the blessed idea of conventual retirement."

"That will I do, most generous Don Lope, and be thankful withal."

- "But stay," added Gomez Arias with mock gravity; "there is one objection to this arrangement."
- "Virgen de las Angustias!—What is it, Señor?" demanded the duenna, in visible alarm.
- "Why!" answered Gomez Arias, "only that thou must sacrifice somewhat of that dear, unsullied reputation by following such a course."
- "Alas, Señor!" exclaimed she of the nice reputation—" That is too true; willingly would I preserve it entire, but feeble mortals are not bound to do more than their strength can compass."
- "True," rejoined Gomez Arias; "thine argument, most venerable Martha, is a very plausible argument, and very consoling withal."

At this moment a noise was heard. The duenna started. "It is my master, and Don Antonio," cried she. "Hence! begone, Don Lope, they must not see us together."

"Fear not, most respected dame," said

Gomez Arias; "I am no college gallant, no unskilful tyro in the affairs of love; I depart but to return in due time."

"Return!" echoed Martha; "to what purpose?"

"To cover thy threadbare reputation," said he laughing; "it appears of so tender a texture, that it is likely to be torn piece-meal, if not remedied in time. Besides, I must protect my own, should it be necessary: a good pilot, even in a calm, must prepare against foul weather."

"Our Lady's blessing be upon your head!" said Martha, "for a right prudent caballero."

"Well, mind to give thy assistance at vespers."

"Ah, my good Señor; my devotion requires no stimulus."

Gomez Arias made his exit, just in time to prevent a meeting with the aforesaid gentlemen. They had been busily occupied in devising the most efficacious means to insure success in their researches. Don Manuel appeared more composed in his demeanor,

for he placed much confidence in the influence and abilities of his ally. Hope, that with its cheering ray lights us even on the gloomy borders of the tomb, now in part dispelled the heavy cloud that overshadowed the deserted father's heart.

Don Antonio took an affectionate leave, and after repeating his cordial offers of assistance, departed.

Monteblanco, when left by himself, felt his wrath again revived, at the sight of the duenna: he therefore renewed his threats of a convent.

"Don Manuel!" said the duenna, with a most sanctimonious look, "I am innocent—innocent, as the child unborn: yet if it so pleaseth Heaven, that I should be immured in a cloister, the Lord's will be done; a convent has no terrors for me; alas! a poor humble sinner can desire no better abode; but think, Señor, how galling it is to be forced by compulsion to embrace a state, that ought to be embraced out of spontaneous inclination; allow me at least a few hours to arrange my worldly

concerns, and I shall be ready to obey your commands."

Saying this, the female tartuffe retired to her chamber, to prepare for her secret departure.

CHAPTER XI.

Tu puoi pensar, se'l padre addolorato Riman quand'accusar sente la figlia, Si perchè ode di lei quel, che pensato Mai non avrebbe, e n'ha gran maraviglia.

Ariosto.

Ben se' crudel, se tu già non ti duoli Pensando cio ch'al mio cor s'annunziava: E se non piangi di che pianger suoli?

Dante.

Whilst the unhappy father was absorbed in his recent misfortune, and endeavouring to beguile the tedious hours, by directing researches in all quarters of the town, where there was any possibility of his daughter having taken refuge, he was surprised with a visit from Gomez Arias.

"Pardon my intrusion, Señor," he said with much courtesy; "my anxiety for the fate of an honorable gentleman, though a rival, will perhaps hold me excused in the eyes of Don Manuel de Monteblanco."

"Sir," returned Don Manuel, "your visits do much honor to my humble dwelling, and stand in no need of an apology."

After the long vocabulary of compliments had been exhausted, Gomez Arias reverted to the adventure in the *Zaguan*, and with apparent anxiety demanded news of Don Rodrigo.

"I have none, Señor," said Monteblanco; "and alas! I am not likely to feel much concerned for the inconvenience of another, at a time when I am myself plunged in deep affliction."

"Perhaps," resumed Gomez Arias, "it may not be altogether right in a stranger to pry into the secret motives of your sorrows; but if I can by any means in my power alleviate them, I should esteem myself particularly honored in meriting your confidence. I but now perceived signs of alarm in the countenances of your servants, apparently not without foundation, and it grieves my very soul to see so honorable a personage

in distress. What has happened, noble Senor?"

- "Alas! My child-my child!" cried the afflicted father.
 - "She is not ill?" inquired Don Lope.
- "Oh! worse!—worse," replied Don Manuel with emotion.
- "Ah!" exclaimed Gomez Arias, feigning surprise. "What?—no—it is not possible—and yet it may be so."
- "Eh?" cried Monteblanco, in an inquiring tone of voice, and opening wide his eyes in the eagerness of anticipation.
- "My valet," continued Don Lope, "brought me information that there was a rumour circulating about the town, relating to the elopement of a noble lady. As I am a perfect stranger in the place, I felt no curiosity to inquire further into the affair, but I could not then imagine that you, Sir, were the victim of this misfortune."

"Alas! Don Lope! it is but too true!"

Gomez Arias had learnt so well the part he
had to perform, that he found not the slightest

difficulty in going through it with the most perfect ease, and by this means he insensibly won the confidence of the deluded Don Manuel, who, like many others under similar circumstances, felt a relief in confiding his sorrows to one, who appeared to sympathise with him so sincerely.

"For surely," continued Don Lope, "some one must have been acquainted with this flight. Have you well examined your servants? Depend upon it, Señor, they are generally the instruments and abettors in the rebellion of children against their parents."

"You are right, my honored Sir," replied Don Manuel. "Servants are the sworn enemies of those who give them bread; but though I am disposed to suspect every one of my dependants of being accessary to this treason, I am yet at a loss on whom to fix my suspicions with justice. I am assured, however, that the duenna must have had an active part in conducting this abominable transaction."

"The duenna!" exclaimed Gomez Arias, darting a look full of wonder and well feigned surprise—"The duenna! By my sword, that must be our clue—I had almost forgotten that you had a duenna in your house, otherwise my astonishment would not have been so lively. Duennas are the soul of every intrigue, and you may indeed affirm, with a safe conscience, that yours has not only connived at, but even facilitated your daughter's escape."

"Of that, alas! I am but too confident," replied the father, "notwithstanding her solemn asseverations and canting hypocrisy."

"Ah! the cunning beldame," quoth Don Lope sarcastically. "She has all the arts of her kind, I perceive; but I hope, Señor Don Manuel, that you are not to be imposed upon by such shallow artifices. We must secure the duenna, and examine her well; perchance a few threats will not be altogether unavailing."

"That is precisely the method I have adopted," said Don Manuel.

- "And where is the old hag, now?" inquired Don Lope.
- "Packing up her trumpery, to depart for the convent."
 - "Pedro"—then called Don Manuel.
- "Your pleasure?" demanded the valet, as he entered.
 - " Send Martha to me."

Pedro obeyed, but shortly after returned with a most dismal and elongated visage.

- "Well, what is the old dotard staring at?" impatiently cried his master.
- "Señor, Martha is flown," replied the dependant.
- "Flown!" reechoed Monteblanco, in consternation; "Flown! And how came you not to prevent her departure?"
- "Save your honor," returned the terrified Pedro, "we all thought she was quietly shut up in her chamber. She has contrived to escape, the Lord only knows how—she must have vanished through the chimney, or a key hole, like a witch that she is, Jesus me valga!"
 - "That she is a witch I am fully aware, and

you are all her familiars," cried Don Manuel with violence. "But you shall rue the moment the hag foiled your vigilance."

Gomez Arias, who had observed a perfect silence, now ventured to remark—

"We need go no further for a positive proof of the duenna's culpability, since her guilt is rendered sufficiently evident by her flight."

"Yes," observed Don Manuel, "but that circumstance affords me little consolation. The means of ascertaining the truth are now lost, by the disappearance of the principal accomplice."

The afflicted old man again gave way to his exasperated feelings; this last stroke quite overpowered him. His pride was sorely wounded, for he was one of those old Spanish cavaliers, who, when deprived of every other satisfaction, took a melancholy pleasure in inflicting his vengeance on the object of his wrath. But even this solitary consolation was now denied him, and the idea that he had been so grossly imposed upon by an old bel-

dame, added to the galling reflections which his misfortune had inflicted.

Gomez Arias exerted his utmost endeavours to sooth his emotion, employing for this purpose all the established maxims resorted to under similar circumstances—maxims profoundly wise no doubt, but which unluckily are often lost upon their object.

"In order then," said Gomez Arias, "to unravel this mistery, it is of the first importance to set about the inquiry from the commencement, in order to discover the authors. We have now the agent of this nefarious enterprise, but we must seek for the actual culprit. There can be no doubt that when a young girl is induced to elope from her home, there is generally a lover who prompts her to so objectionable a measure. Now, Don Manuel, is there no person on whom suspicion may attach with any probability?"

Monteblanco pondered for a while, and then replied—"Really, Don Lope, if there exists such a man, I am totally unacquainted with his person."

- "What, are you unable to hazard even a conjecture?"
- "I am, Don Lope," sorrowfully answered the father.
- "Indeed! this is surprising;—look, Señor, around the circle of your acquaintance, and perchance you may find a clue to guide your investigation."

Don Manuel mechanically looked around, and then shook his head despondingly.

"I would not willingly," continued Gomez Arias, "throw an aspersion on the reputation of any one, but what are we to surmise from the visit of Don Rodrigo de Cespedes? Certainly, there was something unaccountable in his chivalric expedition against me. Besides, why require the assistance of an aged cavalier, when he might have commanded that of more suitable agents for that description of undertaking?"

Gomez Arias met with no great difficulty in deceiving the man he had injured; for one under Don Manuel's distressing situation, is of all others the most easy to be imposed

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upon. His own wounded feelings, in some measure, paved the way to the deception;—as a man who has lost his purse, is apt to throw the charge on the very first individual who unfortunately happens to attract his notice.

"In addition to this," proceeded Gomez Arias, "we may remark the visible alarm which was stamped on the countenance of the young lady, when our quarrel took place—her anxiety to bring the light—the shriek she uttered on imagining that my antagonist had fallen;—these, Don Manuel, are strong indications, which may have escaped your observation in moments of anger and grief, but which to a cooler judgment amount almost to certainty. However, it is not my intention to prejudice your mind against Don Rodrigo; my only desire is to warn you."

By such subtle means, Gomez Arias confirmed Monteblanco's suspicions; for when once started, nothing tends more powerfully to strengthen them than a sort of recantation in their author. Accordingly, Don Manuel

felt almost convinced of the treachery of his friend. Certainly there was ample room to doubt the justice of such an imputation, if he had chosen to reflect coolly on the subject; but in cases like the present, the best reasons are unfortunately most unceremoniously set aside.

Thus Don Manuel was at once deceiving himself, and casting a reflection on the character of a man who had not the remotest connection with the event, and whose integrity in this instance could still less be impeached than in the case of his having feloniously taken the old mule of the friar, instead of his own beautiful horse, for the purpose of gaining by the exchange.

Monteblanco, after a moment's thought, suddenly grasping the hand of Gomez Arias
—"I owe you much, Don Lope," he said,
"and I pray you to be convinced of the sincerity of my gratitude."

"Nay, honored Sir," replied Gomez Arias, "you labour under a delusion—you owe me nothing—at least you owe me no

favor, and I solemnly disclaim any title to. your acknowledgments."

Many and reciprocal were the compliments that passed from this time between the two cavaliers; they mutually offered their services to each other, and Don Lope very prudently afforded to his new friend all the instructions which might tend to render abortive the pursuit and recovery of the fugitive. Shortly after he took leave of the unfortunate cavalier, who was even troublesome in the expression of his gratitude, and whose hopes now began to assume a brighter hue.

CHAPTER XII.

The intent, and not the deed, Is in our power; and therefore, who dares greatly Does greatly.

Browne's Barbarossa.

E ben degg'io, di libertade amico, Meno la morte odiar di quella vita, Che ricever dovrei dal mio nemico.

Metastasio.

WE must now recall the reader's attention to that portion of the history of the rebellious Moors, which is in some measure connected with our tale. The forty chiefs, who had been elected in the revolt of the Albaycin, succeeded, as we have already seen, in disseminating their sentiments through many towns and villages in the jurisdiction of the Alpujarras: their efforts, however, were almost invariably unsuccessful. In most of their encounters, the Moors were either entirely worsted, or compelled to seek for safety in flight; yet they persevered in their designs. Defeats and repeated crosses, instead of subduing, tended only to increase their courage, by adding to the desire of vengeance.

The rebels had already sustained some severe reverses; amongst which the most prominent was the loss of the town of Guejar, which, after a protracted and desperate resistance, had been taken by storm by the combined forces of Count de Tendilla and the famous Gonzalo de Cordova. Most of the Moors either perished in the defence, or were put to the sword by the conquerors; whilst the Castle itself was given up to the flames.

The Count de Lerin next possessed himself of the fortress and town of Andarax; and, exasperated at the resistance of the inhabitants, who continued to protract the defence, although without any chance of success, he at length blew up the Mosque, where a considerable number had fled for shelter, along with the women and children.

Thus of the three strong holds of the rebels, Lanjaron was the only one that now remained unconquered, and this indeed appeared to offer a more formidable resistance, chiefly on account of the garrison having el Negro for a leader—a man of mean origin, but extraordinary courage and resolution. These qualities, together with the services which he had already rendered to the Moorish cause in the wars of Granada, had acquired for him the confidence of his countrymen, who had accordingly intrusted him with the command of this important post. He was a man of severe habits, with a natural ferocity of character, which, although not calculated to conciliate, nevertheless succeeded in commanding the respect and obedience of his troops.

The castle of Lanjaron, situated in the vale of Lecrin, was considered a post of the utmost consequence, not only from the strength of its defences, but from the circumstance of being a place of secure retreat to the Moors of the surrounding country. At this moment the

fortress was closely beleaguered by the troops under the command of the Alcayde de los Donceles and other chiefs, who deprived the rebels of the smallest communication with their friends of the mountains, and had thus reduced them to an utter state of destitution.

Under these distressing circumstances, el Negro assembled his men, and in a short but animated speech endeavoured to make them sensible of the importance of keeping possession of Lanjaron, till the other leaders had gained time to organise their means of defence in the Alpujarras. The words of el Negro were received with a burst of enthusiasm, and for some time the Moors vied with each other in giving the most heroic proofs of courage and perseverance. As the fortress, however, was completely surrounded, and the means of subsistence began to fail them, as a last hope, they made a desperate sally during the night, but were driven back with considerable loss. The failure of this attempt damped their resolution, and some of the less courageous even murmured against an exploit beset with difficulties, which it appeared next to an impossibility to surmount.

El Negro beheld these symptoms of discontent with heartfelt sorrow, but at the same time with a countenance expressive of coolness and undaunted fortitude. exerted his utmost endeavour to quell the rising storm, soothing some with pleasing hopes and promises, and thundering horrible threats on the most refractory. following morning three grisly heads, dripping blood, appeared affixed to poles upon the battlements; but this salutary punishment did not produce the expected effect, for though it appalled the discontented, it inspired not a single spark of valour in their hearts; whilst the Christians, who beheld the ghastly spectacle, augured favorably from this bloody proof of disaffection.

The numbers of the besieged were daily decreasing, until at length they came to an open resolution of surrendering at discretion. The principal men of the garrison, without

the knowledge of their chief, had already sent privately a messenger into the camp of the Spaniards to treat about the surrender, and the conspirators had assembled in a clandestine meeting, when el Negro, whom they supposed to be reposing from his fatigue, suddenly came, and threw them into consternation.

"Traitors! what means this?" he cried, with a voice of thunder; "what are your intents?"

"To capitulate," answered one more hardy than the rest, "and save our lives by a timely submission."

"Villain!" exclaimed el Negro, fiercely, "thou at least shall not enjoy the reward of thy cowardice!" And raising his arm, with a ponderous blow of his scymitar, he cleaved the head of the traitor down to the very shoulder, and the body rolled heavily on the ground. His companions stood aghast in speechless horror, whilst el Negro, his lips curling with ire, and casting around a glance of defiance and contempt—"Go," he exclaimed,

"go, unworthy Moors, and abandon a cause which you have not the courage to sustain. Go, and live like slaves, since ye know not how to die like men. Senseless, pitiful cowards! Was it for this then that you forced me to be your leader? Was it for this that I abandoned Granada, leaving there, at the mercy of the Christians, all my dearest friends, and severing the tenderest ties that bind man to existence? Go, and accept the proffered pardon. I will remain alone, to shew our countrymen of the Alpujarras, that at Lanjaron there was at least one true man—one who knew how to die in the execution of his duty."

He said, and snatching the sacred standard, ascended rapidly to the summit of the battlements, and placed himself by the three heads, which, from their exposure to the sun and wind, had already begun to decay, and presented a most ghastly and loathsome spectacle. The revolted garrison threw open the gates of the castle to their enemies, whilst el Negro, abandoned by all his companions,

continued gloomily pacing the battlements. The Christians, respecting his resolute conduct, and willing to save his life, sent a herald to invite him once more to surrender, declaring he had done his duty, and death alone would be the consequence of his further resistance. He received the message with a sneer, in which contempt was blended with sadness and despair; then taking the presented adarga, the acceptation of which was a signification of peace, he threw it disdainfully on the ground, and trampled it under his feet.

"Carry this answer to him who sent thee!" and folding his arms, he resumed his melancholy walk.

The Christians now took possession of the castle, and el Negro tranquilly beheld their approach. El Alcayde de los Donceles, willing to make a last effort to save him, cried out as he advanced—" Yield thee, Moor—yield—and accept thy pardon."

"Never!" exclaimed fiercely el Negro; the Moor will accept no boon from his

enemies. Death is now my only resource; but, Christians, do not rejoice; I have been subdued by treachery, not by arms. Do not rejoice, for our resources are still great, and while el Feri de Benastepar and Cañeri live, your oppression shall not be complete."

He said, and with a sudden spring he hurled himself from the summit of the tower. His body falling on a rock below, was dashed to pieces.

The surrender of Lanjaron, and the tragical end of el Negro, were an irretrievable loss to the Moors. They now found it utterly impossible to oppose the superior and better disciplined troops of the Christians with any chance of success, either in open battle or in regular sieges. They therefore resolved to limit their whole means of defence to the mountains, a description of warfare more suitable to their wandering habits, and far better calculated to harrass the enemy, without sustaining risk. Accordingly, el Feri de Benastepar, Andalla, Cañeri, and other chiefs, collected their forces, and assigned to

each other a portion of those mountains which they were at once to govern and defend. By this means the Christians were likewise obliged to divide their army into many divisions, and to encounter the rebels in partial struggles. Don Alonso de Aguilar, who had succeeded in compelling el Feri to retreat before him, now pursued his advantage, and advanced towards Gergal, where that rebel chief was collecting his adherents.

In the mean time, Don Antonio de Leyva, whom we have left at Guadix, condoling with Don Manuel at the flight of his daughter, was compelled to forego his wishes to serve the afflicted father. His duty now called him to join the army of Aguilar, and act in conjunction with him against Cañeri and el Feri de Benastepar.

Don Antonio's party had already arrived at Guadix, and the gallant young knight, unwilling to procrastinate his departure when the path of honor was open to him, immediately proceeded to take leave of Monteblanco. He found the unfortunate father plunged in deeper affliction than before. In the society of Don Autonio he had found a source of relief, and his departure was productive of the most melancholy sensations. But Don Manuel felt the necessity of the separation, and he was too generous and noble minded to signify his wish to cause any delay.

"Go, my friend, go, where honor calls you," he said, as he threw his arms round de Leyva's neck—"Go, and show by your conduct how worthy you are of the confidence reposed in you.—When the glory of your deeds shall be blazoned abroad, my ungrateful child will feel a pang of regret for the loss of a man so deserving of her affection and esteem."

Here he was overcome with grief, and could proceed no further.

"Señor," said Don Antonio, "do not yield yourself a prey to despondency; but a short time has yet elapsed since the melancholy occurrence that afflicts you, and you have no reason to relinquish your hopes. In all cases be assured, Don Manuel, that you and those who concern you will always be next my heart, and that unless death deprive me of the power, I shall at least see your wrongs redressed, if I can bring no other consolation."

Saying this he hastily disengaged himself from the arms of Don Manuel, and endeavouring to conceal his own emotion, gave the word of command. He bounded lightly on his spirited barb, and the martial display of his men, the glitter of armour, and the seductive prospect of future glory and renown, powerfully contributed to dispel the cloud that hung over him. Yet it was a sad parting, for there was something peculiarly affecting in the sight of a father who, like Monteblanco, found himself in old age isolated in the midst of the world, and bereft of the last dear comfort that still bound him to life. Besides, in the short interviews between Theodora and Don Antonio, both in the last visit and at former periods, she had left a pleasing recollection in his mind. Already the cries of those who bade the party of de Leyva farewel were diminishing on the ear, and the turrets and steeples of Guadix became more obscurely perceptible in the distance. The warriors began now to assume a mastery over their feelings, and the tear of sympathy was brightened in the glow of expectation. Courage and renown took entire possession of those hearts which but too lately had sympathized with the weaker and more tender sentiments of humanity.

The absence of Don Antonio was like a death-blow to the hopes of Monteblanco. Often did he regret the infirmities of age, which now prevented him from grasping his sword; but his arm was grown nerveless, and for the first time in his life the helpless cavalier felt bitterly the recollection that all his brave sons had sacrificed their lives in the defence of their country, not one now remaining to prop the honor of his falling house. Don Manuel was a man, and this transitory feeling of regret was natural to a father under his affliction, who knew not to whom to turn for consolation and advice.

Gomez Arias, who had insensibly won his

favor, departed the next day for Granada, in which quarter he had no longer any danger to apprehend. He was anxious to assume his station in the war against the rebel Moors. Monteblanco considered his intention not only just, but highly commendable, and a tear coursed down the old man's cheek, as he took leave of the seducer of his child, and the cause of his present misfortunes.

CHAPTER XIII.

D'une secrète horreur je me sens frissoner; Je crains, malgré moi-même, un malheur que j'ignore. Racine.

> Señor Gomez Arias Duelete de mi Que soy nina y sola Nunca en tal me vi.

> > Calderon.

It was a rich and splendid summer evening. The sun was slowly sinking behind the giant mountains of the Alpujarras, whose dark fantastic shadows were gradually lengthening along the plains below. No intruding sound broke upon the soft stillness of the scene, save when the feathered tenants of the forest warbled their evening song, or the tolling of a distant convent bell reverberated through the sombre recesses of the mountains. A soft languor prevailed over the sylvan scenery.

The fancifully wreathing clouds, streaked with the red and gold of the lingering sun—the variegated tints of those quiet solitudes—the warm, chequered streams of light that glanced on the broad-leafed tree, or fitfully quivered over the straggling streamlet—the calm repose which reigned over that wide extending landscape, all tended to raise the mind to contemplation, and to interest the heart.

At this tranquil hour, a group, consisting of three persons, were seen slowly ascending a green sloping height, which seemed designed by nature as a first resting place in the severe ascent of the gigantic mountain. The first of the party was a knight of most gallant bearing, and mounted on a shining black steed. Close by his side rode a beautiful damsel, whose long redundant tresses were with difficulty restrained in a fillet of silver lace. She wore a long riding habit; a Spanish hat, ornamented with a plume of black feathers, was hanging gracefully on one side of her head. Having thrown aside the thick veil

which had protected her from the scorching influence of the sun, she discovered a fair countenance, to whose delicate cheek the heat and exercise had lent a gentle tinge of the rose. Yet an expression of pensive sadness pervaded the features of the lovely traveller.

At a short distance behind these two personages, rode a man who appeared by his dress and deportment to be their attendant. He sat with perfect nonchalance on a stout Andalusian horse, but by the looks of suspicious alertness, which he now and then cast around, it might be inferred that this apparent ease was not in strict unison with his inward feelings. At the moment of which we speak, he was singing in a mezzo tuono the romance of the Marriage of the Cid—

A Ximena y a Rodrigo Prendió el rey palabraymano De juntarlos para en uno En presencia de Layn Calvo.

" Cease thy confounded noise, Roque," cried angrily the knight, who, as the reader

may suppose, was no other than Gomez Arias. "What in the name of Satan can induce thee to sing, when thou hast neither voice nor ear? Give over, for thy confounded harmony is anything but pleasing."

- "Señor," observed the attendant; " what if I only sing to please myself?"
- "Silence, buffoon; or I shall presently raise a discord about thee, by which all thy future powers of hearing shall be ruefully endangered."
- "Pray, Señor, do not deny me this only comfort; I wish particularly to sing at this moment."
- . "Thy reasons?"
- "Because I always sing when I am afraid; there is nothing so efficacious as a song to. drive away fear."
- " In sooth, such singing as thine would drive away the very devil. But why shouldst thou fear?"
- "Under favor, Don Lope," replied the valet, "methinks fear ought to be the most natural sensation at the present moment."

" Darest thou talk of fear, poltroon!" said Gomez Arias.

"By our Lady of the Pillar," ejaculated Roque, "such talk befits both time and place. Are we not in hourly danger of encountering a set of most fierce murderous-looking ladrones?".

"Well, and if that were really the case, we have but to defend ourselves manfully. By the soul of the Cid, I would make very light work of a host of such ruffians."

"Well, my honored master," returned the valet, "but be pleased to consider that this is not our only danger, for I trow we are now in the mountains of Alpujarras, where those accursed and rebellious Moors hold dominion. A plague on the infidel dogs! Are they not continually on the watch to spring upon straggling and unwary Christians, and when they do surprise them——"

"Peace, fool, peace!" impatiently interrupted Gomez Arias, "This is not the Alpujarras. Forgettest thou that when we left

^{*} Thieves.

Guadix two days since, we pursued quite a different route?"

"That I know, Don Lope, but I likewise know that during the night, either by chance or on purpose, we lost our way. Besides I am not so ignorant of the country as to mistake these places, and I would wager my head against two maravedis that we are actually ascending the Alpujarras."

The young lady, who had till now observed a profound silence, with a faultering voice exclaimed—" Oh, heavens! are we really in those terrible mountains, and are we indeed in danger?"

- " No, my love," answered Gomez Arias; "the danger is not so great as this fool would make us believe."
- "No, my lady," retorted Roque; "the danger is not so great, for after all, the worst that can befal us is but to be hung upon a tree, there to dance to the tune of the whistling midnight wind, and to afford a luscious repast to the ravens, and other carnivorous gentry that hold tenantry in these wild passes."

"Heavens!" cried Theodora alarmed.

"Nay, gentle lady," interposed Roque, "the hanging system will only be followed up with respect to my valiant master and his humble servant. As for yourself, the Moors are men celebrated for their gallantry, and would place too great a value on your beauty, to subject it to such rough treatment."

Gomez Arias, greatly exasperated at Roque's insinuations, suddenly turned, and, riding up to him, interrupted the course of his oratory with a smart blow.—" Now, rascal," he said, "if thou darest again to give utterance to any of those ridiculous fears, by Santiago, the Moors shall not be put to the trouble of hanging thee—So be cautious what thou sayest."

"Say!" humbly muttered the valet, "Blessed Virgin! I have nothing else to say; your arguments, Don Lope, are unanswerable. But I hope, my good Señor, I may be allowed to recite my prayers, since singing and rational conversation are interdicted."

"Pray as much as thou pleasest, sinner, provided thy orisons are inaudible to us."

Gomez Arias now endeavoured to calm the

fears of Theodora, who had been greatly agitated by the imprudent remarks of Roque, which tended considerably to increase the depression under which she laboured.

- "My Theodora," he said, " is it possible that I cannot remove the continued dejection that preys upon you?"
- "Forgive me, Lope," she answered; "the expression of my grief I know is painful to thee, but a dismal foreboding obtrudes itself upon my mind, which I strive in vain to banish. Alas! it is fraught with a most fearful, but indefinite anticipation; a woful presage that freezes my very soul."
- "Hush such foolish chimeras," said Gomez Arias; "it is true that, for greater security of avoiding observation, I have been obliged to seek studiously the most unfrequented paths, and travel through these wild and solitary passes; but our journey draws to a conclusion, and all the appalling images of Moorish ruffians will soon be entirely dispelled."
- "Alas! the dreaded sight of those infidels is not the only cause of my emotion," sadly replied Theodora.

"What else can occasion it?" demanded Gomez Arias, with anxiety. "Surely, my Theodora repents not the hour she intrusted herself to the protection of Gomez Arias?"

She spoke not for some time:—a flood of tears relieved her bursting bosom: then, as if struggling to collect her forces which were almost overpowered by sad recollections, she exclaimed—"Oh! never mention the hour of of my crime—for crime it was, and a deadly sin, to abandon the best of parents, in his old age: and vet," she added, sobbing, "conscious as I am of my guilt, were the sin again to be committed, for thy sake, Lope, I should again brave the voice of self-reproach. - Gomez Arias, wert thou to read the hidden pages of my heart, there thou wouldst find a tale of boundless love and never-ending sorrow, which no words of mine can describe, but which must embitter the future portion of my existence, unless we speedily obtain the forgiveness of my injured parent."

"Nay, Theodora, this weakness is as unreasonable as it is unjust; nor can I at all imagine why thy future life should be embittered with grief, united as it is with the very being of Gomez Arias."

"I am sensible," cried Theodora, "both of the tenderness and sincerity of your love, and you know full well with what fervent devotion it is requited."

"What, then, can urge your mind to form such desponding anticipations? Have you seen aught in my conduct,—have you discerned anything in my words, that can afford even the shadow of justice to your apprehensions?"

"No, Gomez Arias," she answered; "your conduct to me has always been kind; your words breathing the same solicitude for my comfort and happiness: but you must forgive the weakness and fears of a fond woman's heart. Forgive me, Lope, if these feelings should sometimes create ideas galling at once to my peace, and derogatory to thy constancy and love. I have laboured hard to subdue them, but, alas! the exertion has constantly proved above my strength; I must

give them utterance. Oh, Lope," she added; mournfully, "I fear you are not the same. Pardon me,—you are not the same, as when I first surrendered to you all my affections, fondly imagining you were mine for ever."

"Not the same!" ejaculated Gomez Arias; have my attentions been less constant than from the first rapturous moment when you allowed me to call you my own?"

A deep long rending sigh burst from the bosom of Theodora, and her whole frame seemed to suffer from a painful recollection.

"No," she said, smiling sadly through her tears, "you watch with solicitude over me, and you are lavish of endearments; but, alas! the pure and soul-warm part of your affection I fear is flown."

"By my honor," said Gomez Arias, "I could never have expected these unkind expressions from you."

"Oh! Lope," cried the affrighted girl; "do not heed me; think not of the remarks to which my foolish fears give rise; I am ashamed of them myself. I will no more disturb your

mind; no, never more shall the voice of complaint sound in your ears, and call forth the resentment of your wounded feelings.—Ah! Gomez Arias, compose yourself, and be not angry with your poor—your helpless Theodora."

As she uttered this affectionate appeal, her beautiful eyes were fixed on Don Lope, with an expression in which all the tender, all the genuine feelings of her heart seemed to be collected. Gomez Arias was softened; his features relaxed from that sudden asperity which had for a moment usurped the more habitual complacency of his countenance, and he endeavoured to dispel from the mind of Theodora the impression which such unkindness might produce.

They had now arrived at the summit of the little hill. It was a most delighful spot. A sward of short pliant grass carpeted a romantic little plain, skirted on one side by a portion of a forest, through which the sun cast short and interrupted glances of his parting splendour. Above the heads of the travellers,

rose in dark grandeur the majestic form of the Alpujarras; and beneath them, as far as the eye could reach, was spread an extensive range of sylvan scenery, intermingled with the habitations of men. Farther, the little quiet villages lay slumbering in the soft blue shadows. The whole of the scene was wrapped in an indescribable charm, that well accorded with the tranquility of the hour.

Here they halted, and Gomez Arias turning to Theodora said in an affectionate tone, "My love, your tender frame has already endured a greater share of fatigue than becomes your strength. Let us then, in this delightful and sequestered spot, indulge an hour in refreshing and invigorating repose."

Theodora assented in silence.

"Nay," continued Don Lope, "consult your inclination. I will not press you to rest, unless you feel its necessity."

"I have no wish but your own," cheerfully answered Theodora; "you appear inclined to stay in this place—let us tarry then."

Gomez Arias sprung lightly from his steed,

and aided his fair companion to dismount. She threw herself into his arms, but as her feet touched the ground, she heaved a sigh, and cast a melancholy look around her.

"How you tremble, my love," said Don Lope; "this is the consequence of that rascally Roque's foolery. I have a good mind to chastise the fellow for the fears he has conjured in your breast."

Roque, who had followed at some distance in silent mood, no sooner heard his name pronounced, than he pricked up his ears like an intelligent dog on the scent for game, and when he heard his master's kind intentions towards him, he ventured to observe—

"Señor, I would not trespass on your generosity; pray reserve your intended favor for a future occasion, when I shall have more specially deserved it."

"Sirrah! be silent; come down, and tie the horses to yonder trees."

The valet obeyed briskly; while Gomez Arias conducted his fair companion to the entrance of the wood; where, arranging a couch under the spreading arms of a huge oak, he invited her to lie down and rest. She was about to accede to his invitation, when they were startled by a shrill and discordant sound accompanied with a heavy flapping of wings, and presently a flight of dull ill-omened ravens issued from their solitary abodes, and overed about, as if to dispute the possession of their ancient homes with the intruders.

A fitful and involuntary shudder ran cold over the affrighted girl, as with a wild and appalled look she gazed on the recluse birds, which their arrival had disturbed; she clung eagerly to Gomez Arias, as they both sat down on the spot above-mentioned.

"What ails you, Theodora?" demanded Don Lope. "Is it possible that a few ravens can inspire with childish terrors a mind like yours?"

Theodora acknowledged her foolish weakness, but she was far from feeling tranquil and consoled. Indeed when she perceived Roque, with visible alarm, cross himself fervently three times, it added to the excitement of her feverish imagination.

Owls, ravens and bats, have always had an indisputable privilege to excite superstitious fears. Whence they derive this particular claim, it would be difficult to determine, but they are generally considered the harbingers of some dismal event, which is more properly, after all, the result of an overheated fancy.

Theodora, who since she left the paternal roof had been a prey to that fixed sorrow which the intoxicating transports of love had not been able to subdue, now contemplated, in the gloomy croaking of the ravens, the sad presage of some dire misfortune. She reclined silently with downcast eyes, while Roque was busy in fastening the horses.

"Gently, gently, Babieca," said the valet, caressing the spirited steed of his master; then he muttered to himself—" for we have nothing to fear if we escape safe and sound from this place—So help me God if I did

not count thirteen ravens, as ill-omened in every respect of size, color and voice, as a Christian might wish to behold—Well, our Lady de las Angustias send us her grace and protection!"

"What art thou muttering there?" asked Gomez Arias. "Thou graceless varlet, hast thou a wish that I should fulfil the promise I made thee a short time since?"

"Señor?" inquired Roque, pretending not to hear.

"No dissembling, thou dog!—What art thou mumbling to thyself?"

"Save you, kind master; sure enough I am only praying, and in so doing I infringe not your commands, since I have your permission to pray to my soul's content, provided it is in a tacit capuchin-like manner."

The ravens having practised their cumbrous evolutions, now sought their rest amidst the deeper gloom of the forest, and all again was hushed, to the great relief of Roque, who forthwith began to devour alone the provisions which, like a careful and sagacious forager; he had provided against the necessities of the journey.

Theodora had laid aside her hat and veil, to enjoy the luxury of repose with greater convenience, whilst her lover placing himself near her, and watching her every movement, diffused by his tender anxiety a transient joy over her features. She soon insensibly sunk into that sweet state of languor which precedes sleep-her beautiful eyes by fits now entirely closing, now gently opening, indicated the gradual absorption of her senses, till at last she fell into a profound slumber. Gomez Arias, who as we have observed stood watching her, like the tender mother over her beloved daughter, now knelt close by her side, and softly pronounced her name—she answered not-he took her yielding hand, gazed over her anxiously, till he was perfectly assured that a profound sleep had completely overpowered her faculties.

"Señor," quoth Roque, "methinks it would be a pity to disturb the slumbers of the poor lady after the journey she has undergone." "I do not mean to interrupt her rest," said Gomez Arias, in a low voice, "so we must even retire."

Then he rose up with cautious silence, and drawing near his valet, he added—

"Rise, rise quickly, and make no noise."

Roque obeyed, and both having retreated to some distance—" Señor," observed the valet, who cared not again to disturb the ominous ravens, for which he felt an instinctive horror—" Señor, no necessity for retiring further."

- "Yes there is an imperious one," replied Gomez Arias, "I can no longer remain here."
- "What say you, my honored master!" demanded Roque, alarmed; "surely you are not afraid of the Moors? By my conscience, we should come to a pretty pass if such were really the case."
- "Peace, thou wretch!" said Don Lope; "speak not a word, but immediately untie my horse, and as you expect to live, mind you make not noise enough to disturb even the leaf of the tree."

"Señor, I do not understand," quoth the bewildered Roque.

"I must begone," impatiently replied his master.

"Gone, Sir! Why I understood you had determined not to break our young lady's repose."

"Nor is that my intention. She must remain here with thee, till I am out of sight."

"Cuerpo de Christo! What ails you my dear Señor; what ails you, in the name of San Jose bendito?" exclaimed the astounded Roque, who really imagined his master was beside himself.

"Listen, Roque," said Gomez Arias, "and mind thou religiously observest my instructions. Unavoidable circumstances require that I and Theodora should part; I have been seeking an opportunity of so doing, and assuredly I shall not find a better than the present. It is necessary I should return to Granada immediately, and it would be highly imprudent to hazard the chance of being seen with Theodora, for reasons of which thou

must be well aware. A separation, therefore, becomes at this moment indispensable. When I am gone, thou shalt awaken you sleeping beauty, and accompany her thyself to the said city, where I shall precede you in order to make arrangements for her reception. There is a nunnery, of which my cousin Ursula is the Lady Abbess, where she shall for the present find an asylum. Thou hast only to inform Theodora, that I thought it most advisable to ride in advance to prepare our retreat. Upon thy arrival at the Torre del Aceytuno a man will join thee, to whom thou must look for further instruction, and whose direction thou art to follow with confidence. Thy reward shall be proportioned to the magnitude of the service; so now get me my horse, and let me begone ere she awake."

Roque remained thunderstruck as his master revealed to him his cruel intentions; the poor fellow drew his hand across his eyes, as if to ascertain whether or no he was under the delusion of a dream; but as his master in a more imperative voice repeated his

injunctions, the reality of his barbarous purpose burst upon his mind.

- "No, no, Don Lope," he said in a supplicating tone, "such surely cannot be your intentions; abandon the poor girl! no, you only wish to trifle with my credulity."
- "I must begone," resolutely retorted Gomez Arias.
 - "Why, Sir, assuredly you loved her?"
 - "I loved her once, but that is passed."
- "Holy Virgin del tremedal! What say you, Señor? What has the poor lady done? How has she offended you, unless it be in loving you too well?"
- "Aye, Roque, thou art a shrewd fellow; she has indeed loved me too well."
- "But consider, my honored master, she is more like an angel-than a woman; never before did I see a being so kind, so tender and devoted."
- "Roque, Roque, be not sententious; I have no time to listen to thy sentimental cant; the qualities which thou praisest in Theodora are precisely those that withdraw me from her.—

Haste thee, I say—What is the fool staring at ?"

"But, Señor Don Lope Gomez Arias," solemnly said Roque, "consider that common humanity——"

"Humanity!" interrupted his master, "how am I deficient in humanity, when I place her in the only situation that becomes her, since a marriage between us is utterly impossible. But enough; a truce with your remarks; prepare to obey my orders, and take care thou art strict in their observance as thou valuest my regard, or tremblest at the effects of my wrath and indignation. However, to remove thy ridiculous and ill-timed scruples, I must recall to thy mind that I cannot pursue another course, for thou art aware that I am betrothed to Leonor: I must not violate the sanctity of my promise, and thereby lose the favor of the Queen, and incur the resentment of the justly offended Don Alonso Aguilar."

This last observation somewhat reconciled Roque to the necessity of the measure, the more

so as he hoped that, when at Granada, another plan might be devised for Theodora, besides that of conventual reclusion; and finally, as he knew that all further expostulation would be thrown away upon his master, he prudently contented himself with shrugging up his shoulders, and holding the stirrup for Don Lope to mount.

Gomez Arias briskly leaped upon his horse, and was about to depart, when casting a last look on the victim he was deserting, the better feelings of his heart seemed for a moment to struggle for predominance.

There is something peculiarly interesting in the sleep of a young and beautiful woman; the features unruffled by anxiety or care, appear more soft and attractive. The mind of the gazer scans with nicer accuracy her charms, and dwells with fonder attention on each beauty of the lovely sleeper. Besides the consciousness of so gentle, so helpless and so heavenly a form, sleeping in innocent security, confiding in the protection of man, and that very helplessness of her nature,

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awakens a sentiment of sympathy and tenderness, as undefinable as it is thrilling and transporting. And such was the sleep of Theodora: she was young and replete with charms, and, alas! but too helpless and in need of protection. Her beauteous form was displayed to the greatest advantage; the sportive breeze now playing amidst her luxuriant hair, which occasionally concealed a countenance beaming in loveliness, and hushed in soft repose, imparted a degree of fairy grace and delicate freshness to her charms. One of her arms was carelessly thrown over her, and with the other she supported her head, while, unconscious of the fate with which she was threatened, she slept on in security. And now a tinge of animation illumined her countenance, or a fascinating smile played upon her lips, as she dreamed perhaps, like the fond deserted Ariadné, that her godlike lover was still watching over the slumbers of his beloved.

Gomez Arias still gazed on her—he heard his name in smothered accents escape her tender bosom, but it awakened in him no feeling of delight, for his heart had now resumed its cold calculations of worldly pursuits; perhaps the predominant sentiment of his mind at this moment, was the necessity of immediate departure, lest the imagination of the unconscious victim should master the deluded senses, and call them back to life, before he had time to remove from the spot.

"Lope! my love!" murmured Theodora, and a gentle thrill seemed to agitate her, as she extended her arm, as though she would assure him that whether sleeping or awake, Gomez Arias was the object that predominated over all her thoughts and affections. Yet Gomez Arias stood calmly for a moment by the victim he was deserting, and bidding her a long farewell, rode slowly and silently on his way.

CHAPTER XIV.

El honor
Es un fantasma aparante,
Que no esta' en que yo lo tenga,
Sino en que el otro lo piense.

Calderon.

Honor's a fine imaginary notion.

Addison.

Honor! thou dazzling and wayward deity, how boundless is thy dominion! How widely different the nature and pretensions of thy worshippers! All do thee homage; all gladly and proudly profess themselves thy votaries; all would resent the supposition of being heretical to thy creed, and yet how few truly adhere to the purity of thy precepts! How few are sincere in the expression of their adoration!—nay, how limited the number of

those who really understand the essence of thy doctrine! The sanguinary ruffian considers himself as zealous in the service of honor, as the high minded and courageous man who has a sword to avenge the wrongs of his country, and a heart to sympathise with the picture of human misery. All are swayed by the magic word, Honor; for even those who affect to despise virtue, her attractions being of too humble and plebeian a character, nevertheless pretend to revere the name of honor, as conveying an idea more bright and consonant with worldly pomp, and at the same time affording a greater latitude for various interpretations. Alas! this very vagueness has something more flattering to deluded mortals, than the strict and definite term, the more heroic nature of virtue.

Honor was the idol of Gomez Arias, who appeared one of the most scrupulous in the observance of its tenets; he could not brook a word, a glance, a smile which might seem derogatory to the essence of its established maxims. Again, his word was sacred and

inviolable. The least equivocation in his promise to man might sully him with an indelible stain; but then he would calmly and deliberately, without transgressing his honor, employ all his guile to deceive a weak and unprotected female. Honor would compel him to acquit the debt of the gaming table, even when he was almost justified in impeaching the integrity of the creditor, but as a counterpoise, that same honor, without any dereliction of principle, allowed him to turn a deaf ear to the claims of more humble suitors; claims, certainly more just and sacred, but far less honorable.

The rigid adherence of Don Lope to his word, was fully exemplified in the convenient recollection of his engagement to Leonor de Aguilar. He had pledged his faith to that lady, and had undoubtedly been a little too remiss in its fulfilment, but now that he had nothing more to hope from Theodora, he was alive to the sacredness of his promise, and the almost dishonorable nature of any delay.

It was by this and the like sophistical reasonings, that he endeavored to palliate his ingratitude and cruelty towards the hapless victim of his lawless desires: for hardened as he was in his libertinism, and unjust as were his sentiments with regard to women, he could not avoid feeling a pang of conscious remorse at the recollection of Theodora. He had. systematically won the confidence of an unsuspecting girl, and when she had intrusted him with her heart's best affections, how was the trust requited? He had despoiled her of her innocence and peace of mind; seduced her from her home: snatched her from the arms of an indulgent parent, and now abandoned her, degraded in her own estimation, and a prey to all the bitterest pangs of shame and remorse, and disappointed love. He had laid rude hands on the tender flower in its opening bloom, and prematurely sipped the sweetness from the blossom, and then unpitying he had cast it by, neglected and forlorn.

It required all the brilliant anticipations of Don Lope's future career, to stifle the un-

pleasant reflections that crowded upon his imagination, and he endeavoured for some time wholly to dispel such unwelcome ideas, by courting others of a more agreeable nature.

The image of Leonor de Aguilar stood before his sight in all the charms of ripened beauty, surrounded with the dazzling splendors of rank, fortune, and a glorious name. Gomez Arias perceived the advantages of his alliance with Leonor, and the wildest dreams of ambition danced in rapid succession before his mind. He beheld himself the envied possessor of the first lady of the land, the near relative of its most respected warrior, and the honorable expectant of the highest His pride would be gratified, preferment. and his fondest desires realized. He held the cup of happiness to his lips, filled even to the brim; he was bewildered, intoxicated with the sweet beverage, and in the flow of pleasurable expectations, the thought of her whom he had made wretched for ever, was soon completely lost.

Alas! the anticipation of the future will always thus overpower the recollection of the past; beauty, honors, glory, and their sparkling attendants, were fearful odds against the love, the solitary love, of a fond and innocent girl—a love which had nothing more to promise, nothing more to bestow. But to return:

No sooner had Gomez Arias quitted the place, than Roque, struck by the decision and promptitude of his master, stood silent and motionless, gazing on the unfortunate and deserted fair. She was tranquilly sleeping; dreaming perhaps of love and joy, and Roque hesitated to shorten the sweet illusion by making known to her the dismal reality. He felt an unconquerable repugnance to be the messenger of such fearful intelligence; for though the valet was accustomed to the unprincipled vagaries of his master, he was not entirely divested of humanity, and he could not but commiserate the utter wretchedness of Theodora's lot.

But now the soft rays of evening were

deepening into twilight; darker shadows stole imperceptibly over the various-tinted and drowsy landscape, till at last all was enveloped in one calm uninterrupted blue of night.

The superstitious fears of Roque, as he saw the gloom increasing around, overcame his feelings of compassion, and he began to think of awakening Theodora, when the hollow sound of a horn burst suddenly upon his ear, and momentarily rivetted him to the spot. He looked towards the quarter from whence the blast proceeded, and with surprise and terror he beheld, at a short distance above his head, two men, who, as well as he could distinguish, were arrayed in Moorish attire; presently three or four others made their appearance, and Roque, now dead to all other sensations than those of personal danger, sprung eagerly upon his horse, and fled with the utmost precipitation in the direction that his master had taken.

The Moors, for such they were, saw his flight with savage disappointment; but Roque

having the advantage of a horse to facilitate his escape, they considered that a pursuit would be useless. They left him, therefore, hoping that his capture would be made by some other of the straggling parties that patroled those solitudes.

- "The base Christian escapes," said one, who appeared to be the leader.
 - "Yes, Malique," answered another, "but let us look what he leaves behind."
 - "By the Prophet's sacred beard," cried Malique, "it bears very much the resemblance of a woman. But she moves not.—What, is she dead? The detested ruffian surely has not murdered her. Let us hasten down and ascertain the truth."

They rapidly descended from the height, and surrounded the unhappy Theodora, who, quite overcome with fatigue, was still sleeping.

- " She is not dead; she is only asleep," quoth one.
- "And a pleasant apartment has she chosen for her chamber," cried another.

"She is a lovely lady, and gentle handmaids will she have to awaken her withal," observed Malique. "Soft and fair as one of the Houris promised to the faithful in paradise. By the holy sepulchre of Mecca, such a morsel as this would not be disagreeable even to the fastidious palate of our chief Cañeri."

He approached, and for a moment stood gazing over the sleeping beauty, his eyes glistening with savage pleasure; then pulling her gently by the arm,—

"Awake, fair maiden, awake!" he said, in as soothing a tone as the roughness of his nature would permit.

With a fitful start Theodora awoke. She opened her eyes. Oh, horror! horror! Surely she was labouring under the impression of a fearful delusion. Yes, it must be the wild chimera of her feverish fancy. She saw herself surrounded by a band of appalling figures, each seeming to vie with his fellow who should display in his appearance the greatest terror.

The pale moon that now slowly arose from

behind the clouds, threw around streams of chilling, unearthly light, which served to illumine countenances still more chilling and unearthly. Strange black eyes, wildly rolling under their darksome covering, were all intensely gazing on her; and horrid grins, which were peculiar to those features, served to increase the natural ferocity of their ruffian aspect. Poorly attired they were, -outcast and rebellious spirits, who had the caverns of the forest for their resting place, and the wild mountain for their country. The tranquil recklessness of their wandering life was depicted in all their movements; and the cold expression of their bronzed features betokened a hardihood in the commission of crime, and in the unwearied pursuit of vengeance.

"Fair Christian, be not afraid," said Malique; "we will not harm thee."

Theodora looked at the speaker and closed her eyes, as if unable to endure the sight. Words coming from so terrible a source could convey no confidence; and kindness and assurances of safety, offered by such a being, seemed a refinement of cruelty, to render dishonor and death more poignant. A broad face, of swarthy complexion, was rendered frightful by an enormous mouth, where large white projecting teeth seemed to be placed more to disfigure than to adorn it. A large scar extended across the face, dividing the eyebrows, and adding new terrors to that already repulsive physiognomy.

When Theodora recovered a little from her first emotion, she became a prey to the most harrowing recollections. Alas! her réason seemed to return only to augment the poignancy of her distress.

"My love! my own Lope!" she franticly cried, "where art thou? Come, come and protect thy poor Theodora!"

The hardened Moors raised a laugh at those piteous exclamations, whilst Malique observed—

"Nay, lady, if that same Lope be thy husband, or lover, call him not; for I presume he is not within ear-shot, and can afford thee no assistance; so be composed, and yield submissively to thy fate, since there is no other alternative left thee."

Theodora heeded him not, for she was absorbed in the ideas that crowded upon her mind. Terrible was the sight of those mountain ruffians, and horrid was the anticipation of her destiny, yet only one melancholy, heart-rending misfortune occupied her every feeling. She was alive to one only calamity, but in that, alas! all the horrors with which fate could overwhelm her were at once combined. She saw him not-the man of her heart—her last protector, and the single link that bound her to existence. Gomez Arias was not by her side; had he abandoned her? She could not harbour such a thought in her innocent bosom,—nay, not even in a transitory flash, was the dreadful truth revealed to her. She was at least blessed in this ignorance, but yet Gomez Arias was not present. She thought that her lover had been murdered, but not that he had abandoned her.

Malique now made a sign, and one of his companions untied the horse which had been left behind.

- "Come, fair maiden," he then said, addressing Theodora, "thou must mount and follow us."
- "Follow you! Oh! heavens, have pity on me!"
- "We do pity thee, lady, for we intend to carry thee to a place of safety, where, if thou knowest how to use to advantage the attractions of which nature has been so prodigal to thee, thou mayest perchance experience a lot far more fortunate than a Christian captive has a right to expect when in the power of the oppressed and injured Moors."
- "Alas! where do you lead me?" again tremblingly demanded Theodora.
- "Even to our chief Cañeri; and we can promise thee that if thy charms are such as to insure his affections, thou wilt be honored with his choice, and perhaps rank foremost amongst his wives."
- "Oh! horror," cried the wretched girl, in frantic agony. "Kill me, oh! in pity kill me, before I am overwhelmed with such degradation."

She threw herself on the ground, and fearfully clasped the knees of the ferocious Moor.

"Kill thee!" re-echoed Malique; "no, no, thou art too beauteous, too lovely. Thy grief at present for the death of the man thou be-wailest, makes thee call for a fate which some time hence thou wilt thank me to have spared thee: with Cañeri thou wilt learn to forget the lover thou deplorest, for thou wilt find that a Moor can love even more sincerely than a Christian."

Theodora entreated in vain. Deaf to her piercing cries, Malique mounted her palfrey, and forcibly placed her before him to prevent her falling, as her frame shook convulsively, and he began to fear he would shortly have to support a lifeless burthen.

Night's sable pall had now overspread the drowsy earth. The moon no longer afforded her light, and thick darkness hung over those mournful solitudes. The listless silence was only broken by the tramp of one solitary horse; while the suppressed gaiety of the Moors, and the deep sighs that oft escaped

from a sorrowing heart, but too plainly told the tale of violence and distress.

A calm cold tranquillity presided over the place. The screech-owl gave one gloomy shrill and prolonged note, and all was still again. But that sound went thrilling to Theodora's heart, like the death-knell on the mountain blast; while the night wind blew fearfully, and the dismal howling was rehearsed by the echoes of the wilderness.

But deserted and lonely as were those dark recesses, more lonely and deserted still was the heart of Theodora. She was a wretched outcast, a solitary being in the world, and she lived on memory alone. Alas! it is in the hour of distress and perilous adventure, that the voice of memory holds more busy converse with the mind. She then tells a long and varied tale, in which the fortunate portion of our past existence is powerfully heightened, whilst the gloomy part is rendered lighter by the weight of actual endurance. In this hour of terror, the remembrance of the happy home which she should never see again, and

the tranquil pastimes of innocence which she could never more enjoy, passed in rapid suc-The first dawning cession before her mind. of genuine love-the fervour of adoration, all were fled. The image of Don Lope, rendered still more endearing by his untimely loss, filled up the measure of Theodora's woe, till her heart could no longer support the pressure She sobbed aloud: and of so much distress. the tears which fell from her eyes in some measure relieved her bursting heart. looked around, and saw nothing but the undisturbed continuance of wild solitudes, clothed in dark shadows; and she heard nought but mournful sounds to add to the wretchedness of her already deplorable lot. The ill-omened bird again shrieked, and the wind howled fitfully; whilst the moon, issuing from behind a cloud, now threw a cold comfortless light, which imparted a death-like hue to every object around.

While thus overwhelmed with sensations of terror at her forlorn situation, she perceived some object of dark appearance hanging upon a tree almost across their path, and waving to and fro at the will of the blast. A glimpse of moonlight now falling upon the place, discovered a human figure: it was indeed the body of a murdered man. Theodora shuddered at the sight: an icy chill crept over her, and she dreaded, and yet was eager to learn what she, alas! too well anticipated.

"The sight appears to unnerve you, lady," coolly observed her conductor, "and I wonder not, for it is a sorry sight for a tender female, and a Christian withal. Yonder scarecrow was, a short time since, a Christian knight, and is there placed as a warning to his fellow-countrymen how they dare provoke the angry lion in his dominions. In each Moor will the Christian encounter a lion;—nay, something even more terrible than the king of beasts; for, joined with the mighty strength and fierce resolution of this animal, we have the reason and wounded feelings of men."

"By the prophet," said one of the Moors, "that Christian well deserved his fate; a more desperate man never did I see!"

"Aye," continued another, "he fought

bravely, and we bought his life at the dear price of two comrades."

"I came not till he was dispatched," exclaimed Malique in a haughty tone, "otherwise the combat would not have been long dubious; but you are a cowardly set, and had the Christian been seconded, I suspect that the five who attacked him would have been disgracefully driven back: but he fought alone, his dastardly servant having fled. Pity we could not catch the rascal, for he would have made a proper accompaniment to his master on the next tree."

Theodora listened in frozen suspense, whilst another of the Moors observed, in an under-tone.—

"'Twas unfortunate though, that love should have brought about his death: in his last moment he said something concerning love; and who knows but this young maiden'—

Theodora heard no more,—she uttered a faint smothered scream, and fell lifeless into the arms of Malique.

"Give help! give help! she faints! poor damsel—Get some water from the brook."

They halted a moment, and sprinkling the reviving liquid over Theodora's face, succeeded in recalling her back to life. Malique then endeavoured to administer words of comfort to the distressed girl, but he was utterly unsuccessful; a settled gloom pervaded her soul, and she discarded the very idea of consolation. Thus they continued to travel during the night, till the first gleams of the dawning day brought to their view the outline of a village enveloped in the morning mist.-As they gently advanced, the scene enlarged, and the shade gradually rolling off, a little quiet town became at length perceptible, shining in the first rays of the sun, and fresh with silvery drops of the dew. The sombre aspect of the Alpujarras began to lose its sterner frown in the loveliness and animation of the morning hour. But alas! it brought no comfort to the desponding heart of Theodora. Deep and poignant as her sorrows were, she felt conscious that a yet more dreadful fate awaited her; she was about to be offered a victim to the lawless desires of a ruffian, and an infidel. Death alone could release

her from so degrading a destiny; but even death, that last melancholy consolation, was denied to her. She prayed fervently to heaven, and her supplications, pronounced in the sincerity of her heart, served only to console her. No help came: eagerly she cast her eyes around, and clung with fond endearment to the wildest hopes that ever fancy created.—She hailed with a fluttering expectation the least sound, for in it she was willing to fancy a deliverer. The distant tramp of a horse, or the bark of a dog, failed not to raise hopes which tended only to render her distress more poignant by disappointment.

Her mind, worn out in this conflict, began to lose its powers of consciousness, and as they approached the town, she gradually fell into a state of passive despair. She saw without emotion a group of men standing at the entrance, who, in conjunction with some ragged children, as soon as she was perceived, raised an exulting shout.

A Christian captive! a Christian captive!— And presently three or four armed Moors came forward, to whom Malique related his

adventure. They then proceeded altogether through the principal street of the town of Alhacen, which was at that time the headquarters of the Moors, who fell within the jurisdiction of the rebel chief Cañeri. town presented a most dismal and disconsolate aspect; the inhabitants bearing in their appearance a proof of their miserable wandering life, and seeming all prepared to abandon their precarious tenements at the first summons. Indeed the late losses which they had sustained, and more especially the surrender of Lanjaron, contributed, to keep them in a state of continual alarm. feeling was considerably augmented by the . intelligence they had just now received, that Alonso de Aguilar, the most renowned and the most redoubtable of their enemies, was rapidly advancing against El Feri de Benastepar. However, as they had nothing to lose, -no riches to abandon-no pleasures to relinquish—no comforts to forget, the expression of their countenances exhibited a cold resignation, blended with gloomy ferocity.

The party that conducted Theodora having vol. 1.

traversed the town, stopt at its extremity, before a house which appeared somewhat in better order than the rest, in front of which several armed Moors were pacing to and fro.

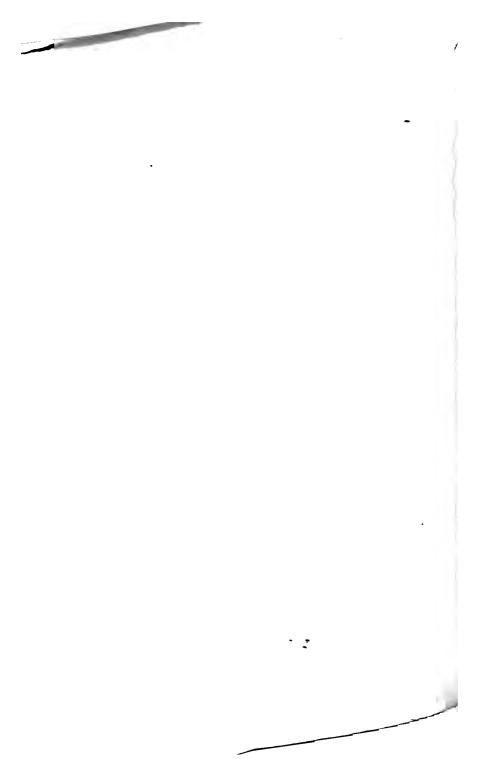
Malique demanded an immediate interview with Cañeri, which was denied him on the plea that the chief was at the moment deeply engaged in a conference with the most important amongst the Moors. Soon after, however, a short broad-faced ugly fellow made his appearance, and with demonstrations of joy welcomed Malique, who was his kinsman.

"By our holy prophet, Malique, I am glad to see thee return with such a goodly spoil:— Cañeri is not to be interrupted now, but thou mayest be sure of a good reward."

Aboukar, for such was the Moor's name, then ushered in his kinsman. Every one seemed to pay great respect and deference to the little man; it was with reason, for he acted in no less a capacity than master of the household to the mountain sovereign of the place. Meantime Theodora was intrusted to the care of an old hag, wife to Aboukar, and a renegade Chris-

tian. She conducted her ward to a little narrow apartment, where having placed some refreshments, she recommended Theodora to partake of them, and retired.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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